

## Graduate Student of Theatre Arts Becomes Columbia's First Liberace Scholar

BY KRISTIN STERLING

The mention of Liberace typically evokes images of sequins, Steinways and candleabras. But to Bathsbeba Doran, who arrived at Columbia University last fall from England to begin her graduate work in playwriting as a Fulbright Scholar, it does not. This year, Doran returns to Columbia with the help of a Liberace Scholarship, a unique program that provides grants to accredited institutions and organizations for training in the performing and creative arts.

Although this is the first year that Columbia has had a Liberace Scholar, the Liberace Foundation for the Performing and Creative Arts has provided over \$4 million in scholarships since 1976 to over 100 prestigious institutions and 1,400 of their students for the advancement of music, theatre, dance and visual arts.

"I once read that Liberace coined the phrase 'I laugh all the way to the bank.' It is definitely the case that the Foundation he established is a major player in helping arts students and we are thankful to them," said Bruce Ferguson, dean of the School of the Arts.

The merit-based review process was limited to promising and deserving graduate students studying acting, directing or playwriting who demonstrated exceptional tal-



RECORD PHOTO BY KRISTIN STERLING

Bathsbeba Doran

ent, drive and artistic potential.

Columbia's first recipient has been making the most of her time and opportunities in New York. Doran, in conjunction with another Columbia student, Emily Conbere, has established a theatre company, Our Theatre. The company has two plays in preliminary stages of production and recently produced a writing festival in London. During the course of the festival, both well-known and new writers, including Columbia playwrights, directors, producers and actors, met at the Battersea Arts Center in London in September to participate in forum discussions focused on writing. The

goal of the festival was to generate excitement and provide a transatlantic link for off and off-off Broadway productions.

In addition to these endeavors, Doran has been working on her newest play, "Fifteen Minutes," which was a collaboration project last semester. She is hopeful that production will begin in the spring with a director that she also met at Columbia.

"The amazing thing about being at Columbia is the people you get to work with," said Doran. "Columbia offers a very strong support network, especially the faculty. Students have access to connections and opportunities both at Columbia and in New York that would not be open to you in other places."

During her time in New York Doran has also interned at the Atlantic Theatre Company where she had the opportunity to read scripts, watch rehearsals and have one of her short plays performed. She also had a full-length stage play, "I Kathryn," read at the Cherry Lane Theater by Olympia Dukakis.

"Doran has an extraordinary tal-

ent as a young playwright," said Eduardo Machado, associate professor of Theatre Arts. "Her imagination and energy are boundless and I expect that she will have an exciting career. We are thrilled that the Liberace Scholarship was available to assist her with her studies."

Doran's professional career took root in her native England. During her undergraduate studies at Cambridge, she wrote and performed a two-woman comedy revue, "Feminine Wash." After graduating from Cambridge, Doran wrote comedy for British television.

"Writing for television for two years, helped me determine that my goal is to write plays," said Doran. "I think it is important that I had this experience before coming to Columbia and continuing my studies, for I know where my interests really lie."

As with most young artists, fund-

ing concerns weigh on Doran, both funding for her works and her education, and the Liberace scholarship has been a welcomed form of assistance.

Liberace considered the Foundation one of his greatest achievements. In his book, "The Things I Love," Liberace wrote, "a lot of good things have happened to me in show business and I want to do what I can to give others just starting out a career boost. I hope the Foundation projects will continue into the future to offer gifted newcomers financial help, and in many cases, artistic exposure as well."

During his career Liberace, an internationally renowned pianist and showman, performed with major symphonies from the London Philharmonic to the Boston Pops and entertained audiences with classical and popular music as well as stage and television shows.

## Lani Guinier Challenges the Rules of the Power Game at Barnard College's Gildersleeve Lecture

BY MATTHEW SCHUERMAN

Lani Guinier brought her unique vision of social justice to an overflow crowd of almost 300 in Barnard Hall Nov. 13, exhorting her listeners to change the rules of the power game instead of simply replacing the people in charge.

The Harvard law professor, delivering this year's Gildersleeve Lecture, said too often social reformers fail to take aim at true injustice: a winner-take-all society where too few people have any power at all.

"When we become the winners, somehow we believe we will exercise zero-sum power differently," Guinier said. "It is that claim I want to challenge, because climbing up the hierarchy — what a colleague calls climbing backwards up the cheese grater — you become a nubbin of who you once were."

Students, faculty and other members of the college community filled the seats and lined the walls of the Julius S. Held Lecture Hall, vying to hear the outspoken civil rights theorist who first gained prominence when, in 1993, President Clinton nominated her as assistant attorney general only to withdraw her name before it came up for a vote. Five years later she became the first tenured African American woman faculty member at Harvard Law School.

Guinier expressed concern for the way civil rights have been restricted since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and also poked fun at leaders of African-American organizations who rely more on rhyme than on leadership.

But for the most part, her lecture was full of stories about people rearranging power structures: a city councilor in Brazil proposed bills formulated in theater workshops with different constituencies; law students played a form of bingo based on which of their classmates talked the most during lectures; a unit of all-women police officers brought crime down in a New York City housing project.

The female officers, Guinier noted, could not intimidate the residents of the housing project with their height or strength the way that male officers could. But the women changed the rules of the game, winning the respect of potential trouble makers in other ways.

"Their power lay in reaching out and identifying with these young men and mentoring them," Guinier said. "Women are willing to dissipate conflict, not dominate the situation."

Guinier also drew upon her forthcoming book, "The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy," co-authored with Gerald Torres and due to be published by Harvard University Press in February. The title refers to the way that minorities and women have been used to signal when something has gone awry in society, much the way the canaries that accompanied coal miners underground would die first, indicating that oxygen was running low.

"Our solution is to outfit the canary with a pint-sized gas mask so it can withstand the toxic atmosphere," she said.

But instead, Guinier suggested that broader solutions can benefit all sectors of society. In another of

her anecdotes, a calculus professor named Uri Treisman at first introduced his African-American students to techniques, such as lunchtime study groups, that made his Chinese-American students successful. That, in essence, is handing a gas mask to the canary. Treisman ultimately changed the atmosphere when he refashioned his whole course to include the type of group problem-solving that would benefit all students.

A different sort of civil rights were on the mind of audience members, who in questions following the lecture, brought up the plight of Arab Americans and others who have been detained without charges since the Sept. 11. Diane Aboushi, a Barnard alumna from the class of 2000, asked if the detainees might not form the basis of the next civil rights movement.

"I'm skeptical of that," Guinier answered, "because of the way in which dissent generally is being silenced and the difficulty of having a conversation when nothing critical is being said."

Guinier continued, "But I challenge each of us to find that opportunity to reaffirm power to achieve justice that benefits more than just ourselves."

Another audience member asked for Guinier's opinion of women's roles in African-American organizations.

"Too much of the current civil rights leadership is oriented towards a single individual who stands before a podium speaking in rhyme," Guinier replied. "I'm not convinced that's what's needed to lead a social justice movement. There are women leaders, but I fear those women are running their organizations the same way their predecessors did."

## Philanthropist and Civic Activist Luella LaMer Slane, 82, Dies

Luella LaMer Slaner, a philanthropist and civic activist who supported a range of research and education endeavors, including the advancement of research on fusion energy at Columbia, died Nov. 3 at her home in Scarsdale, N.Y. She was 82.

Slaner's philanthropy highlighted her commitment to education and civil service; her generosity supported research on Alzheimer's disease and alternate energy sources, international and women's studies, treatment and support for Alzheimer's patients, scholarships for young women and a center for battered women and their children.

As a member of the New York State board of the League of Women Voters, she played an important role in changing the state voter registration laws during the 1950's. She was born in 1919 in Englewood, N.J., the daughter of Ethel McGreevy and Victor K. LaMer, Professor of Colloid Chemistry at Columbia from 1921 to 1961.

She was a benefactor of the Plasma Physics Laboratory at the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science. Through the Department of Applied Physics and Applied Mathematics, she provided funds

for the creation of two junior faculty positions, and supported research that advanced new techniques to confine high-temperature, ionized matter for fusion energy.

Motivated by the 1973 oil embargo, she believed the health of the planet could be improved by developing alternate energy sources. In 1981, she led efforts to raise funds and produce a documentary describing the potential for fusion energy that was televised nationally.

Slaner's philanthropy included three endowed professorships at her alma mater, Wellesley College, and at Clarkson College, in honor of her father. She was also an accomplished athlete, excelling in golf and tennis and later became a life master in bridge.

She was married for 54 years to Alfred P. Slaner, who was president and chairman of the board of Kaiser-Roth Corporation, and co-founder of Vishay Intertechnologies. He died in 1996.

Slaner is survived by three daughters, Eugenia Ames, Barbara Winslow and Deborah Slaner Larkin, a sister, Pauline LaMer Burgo, and five grandchildren. A grandson, Alexander K. Ames, is a 1999 graduate of Columbia College.

## Committee on Socially Responsible Investing Announces New Members

Columbia has announced the new members of the Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing for the 2001-2002 academic year. The Committee's purpose is to advise the Trustees of the University on ethical and social issues relating to the management of the University's endowment. The members of the committee are appointed by President George Rupp, following their nomination by deans, the student caucus of the University Senate and school alumni associations.

This year's faculty members are: Martha Howell (Arts & Sciences), Mischa Schwartz (Engineering), Harvey Goldschmid (Law) and Dahlia Remler (Public Health).

This year's student members are: Elizabeth Mackay (Law), Andrew Holz (Physicians & Surgeons), Dawson Wayne Her Many Horses (General Studies) and Jacob Kurlander (Columbia College).

The committee's alumni members are: Brian Krisberg, CC'81, Law'84, Robert Diamond, Journalism'67, Oscar Garfein, CC'61, Physicians & Surgeons'65, Business'97 and Donald Ross, CC'52, Engineering'53.

The University has made available to students, faculty, alumni and staff in Room 522, Interchurch Center (475 Riverside Drive) a listing of the public equity holdings in the University's endowment as of June 30, 2001.