Two Columbia Alumni Honored With MacArthur Fellowships

Katherine Boo, BC ’98, a Washington Post investigative journalist, and Camilo Vergara, GSAS ’77, a photographer-ethnographer, have been named two of the 24 recipients of a MacArthur Fellowship for 2002, a “genius” award bestowed annually by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The Fellowships grant $500,000 in “no strings attached” support over the next five years.

Boo’s work as a journalist and editor has encompassed national and international issues, but most of her recent efforts focus on stories of those struggling with economic dislocation, or mental or physical disabilities. In 2000, she won the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for her Washington Post series, “Invisible Lives, Invisible Service” for her Washington Post work as a writer and editor for the Washington City Paper and The Washington Monthly (1988-92). Boo also writes regularly for The New Yorker. She recently at work on a book about low-income families and children.

Boo’s summa cum laude from Barnard in 1988, subsequently went to the New York Times as a writer and editor and to the Washington City Paper.

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Students for NYC Public Schools, SOA Join Professional Actors in Producing Miller Theatre Event

Six months ago, a dozen graduate students from Columbia’s School of the Arts Theater Program were charged with turning their artistic talent from New York City high schools on journalistic writing and theater techniques. They staged impromptu dialogues; the topic was September 11. On Mon. Oct. 28th, seven one-act works inspired by the stories and experiences of these New York City teenagers, will be presented during an original evening of theater at Columbia’s Miller Theater (116th and Broadway) at 8 p.m. For contact visit www.theschool.columbia.edu or (212) 330-7746.

An Epiphany of Grace, the one-time production is a theatrical demonstration of the power of creativity, collaboration and civic spirit in overcoming tragedy and adversity. It is the culmination of the unique Columbia-sponsored Victory Project, a performing arts experience that paired students from New York City high schools and graduate students of Columbia’s School of the Arts with accomplished theater arts professionals, including playwrights, directors, actors, composers and set designers.

This project is so unusual because it combines professional artistic talent from New York City and Los Angeles, the resources and teaching of Columbia’s academic community and students in the public schools who have a real interest in theater,” said Marc Meyer, executive director of the Center for Integrated Learning and Teaching at The School at Columbia, Columbia’s new K-8 school, which has chosen this project to spearhead the School’s educational outreach to New York City schools. “The spirit of creative collaboration throughout this project, from professionals offering their services pro bono to the students freely committing their free time, has been exceptional,” Meyer said.

Victor Talmadge, actor and playwright, who helped to conceive the project, added: “The plays all incorporate the view-points of New York City high school students. This has been a

Architecture School Honors Legacy of Preservationist James Marston Fitch

Most New Yorkers are enchanted by the enduring historical aesthetics of Grand Central Station, Ellis Island and South Street Seaport. But what many don’t know is that the preservation of these sites is a result of the pioneering work of former Columbia Architecture professor James Marston Fitch, the inventor of Historic Preservation as a professional discipline. Columbia’s School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation is honoring his legacy with the creation of the School’s first named professorship—James Marston Fitch Professorship in Historic Preservation.

“The legacy of James Marston Fitch is worldwide,” says Architecture Dean Bernard Tschumi. “He initiated a new sensibility toward historic buildings.”

Fitch, an architect and reformer from the early days of modernism in America, played a critical role in the response to the demolition of Penn Station and the other events that gave rise to the preservation movement. Through contact with architects in Europe, Africa and the Middle East in the 1950s and 1960s, Fitch discovered extensive campaigns underway to preserve religious and secular historic buildings and special programs were established to train professionals to carry out this work.

With this information in mind, Fitch then an associate professor at Columbia, was instrumental in the implementation of several historic preservation courses into the architecture curriculum. In 1967, a certificate program University Professor Eric Kandel opened the ceremony by reminding Colombians of the University’s 248 years of exceptional interdisciplinary contributions to society and the responsibilities that have gone with them. Calling the University a major custodian of knowledge, Kandel stressed the importance of building on the past decades of Columbia’s unity with a vigilance for this new era. And to the new president, Kandel said, “We feel University’s 248 years of exceptional interdisciplinary contributions to society and the responsibilities that have gone with them. Calling the University a major custodian of knowledge, Kandel stressed the importance of building on the past decades of Columbia’s unity with a vigilance for this new era. And to the new president, Kandel said, “We feel

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President Bollinger, right, with New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who proclaimed Oct. 3, 2002, as “Lee C. Bollinger Day in the City of New York.”

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Professor David Helfand discusses teaching new course of “scientific hubris.”

An excerpt from President Lee C. Bollinger’s inauguration speech to the Columbia community.

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