Nicholas Dirs
Named CU Vice President for Arts and Sciences

Nicholas Dirs, a widely respected scholar whose areas of expertise include Chinese, South Asian and British colonial history, has been named the new Vice President for Arts and Sciences and dean of the faculty of Arts and Sciences, effective Sept. 1. Dirs will leave his position as chair of Columbia University’s Department of Anthropology and the Franz Boas Professor of Anthropology and History, dual positions he has held since joining Columbia in 1997.

Prior to joining Columbia, Dirs held a joint appointment in the Departments of History and Anthropology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. While there, he founded the interdepartmental program in anthropology and history and directed the Center for Southeast Asian Studies.

“The Arts and Sciences at Columbia University are at a critical juncture,” Dirs said. “As we move forward, I hope to work with the administration to address a range of issues affecting the intellectual environment, pedagogical resources and quality of life for faculty. Building on my own experience in and commitment to interdisciplinary and internationalization, I also look forward to working with the faculty to make the Arts and Sciences more diverse, vital and innovative in the years ahead.”

St. Petersburg Times’ Barnes to Chair Pulitzer Board

Andrew Barnes, chairman and CEO of the St. Petersburg Times, has been elected chair of the Pulitzer Prize Board, Columbia University announced. He has served as a board member since 1998.

A newspaper journalist for more than 40 years, Barnes has devoted most of his career to the St. Petersburg Times, where he has held the paper’s top post since 1988. Columbia awards the Pulitzer Prizes on the board’s recommendation. Members of the board serve a maximum of nine years.

SOA Student Christopher Carlson Honored With Humanitas Fellowship

Christopher Carlson, an SOA student in the Film Division, received a Humanitas Prize at the 2004 Humanitas Prize awards ceremony in Los Angeles. The award, created by Lloyd and Lynn Angell Humanities Comedy Fellowship, carries a stipend of $10,000.

Carlson received the award for a “spec” script he wrote for an episode of the sitcom Scrubs, titled My Funk in the Road, Carlson penned the script a TeenWright class.

A North Dakota native, Carlson graduated from the University of North Dakota before becoming a speech writer for Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.). While at Columbia, Carlson received a Fellowship from Comedy Central, which helped to pay his tuition.

Third Annual Kurt Schork Awards

Courageous reporting of the Methodist region’s brutal practices in Zimbabwe and a Romanian journalist’s investigation into government corruption in Romania, have won the 2004 Kurt Schork Awards in International Reporting.

The awards, given in honor of the late Kurt Schork, a reporter killed in a military ambush while on assignment for Reuters in May 2000, recognize courageous and outstanding light on controversial issues, including conflicts, human-rights concerns or cross-border issues in a particular country or region.

This year’s winners are Andrew Meldrum, freelance reporter for The Guardian, and Lisa Anem, investigative reporter for the Romanian newspaper Adevărul.

An international panel of judges each year selects a freelance journalist or writer of any nationality covering international news, and a local reporter in a developing country or nation.

Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory Awards Veltenes Prize

The University’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and the G. Unger Vetlesen Foundation will award the 2004 Vetlesen Prize, considered among the most prestigious of earth sciences awards, to professors Richard Peltier and Sir Nicholas Shackleton.

The prize carries a cash value of $200,000 to be split between the honorees. The Vetlesen Prize is administered by the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and is granted for revolutionary scientific achievements resulting in a clearer understanding of the Earth, its history or its relationship to the universe.

Peltier, Department of Physics at the University of Toronto to retire, is being awarded the Prize for developing a series of increasingly accurate techniques that reconstruct the distribution and thickness of continental ice sheets during the ice age.

Shackleton, Godeke Institute for Quaternary Research at the University of Cambridge, is being awarded the Prize for far-reaching contributions to the understanding of the history of the Earth’s climate system, playing a leadership role in a major revolution in the geologic sciences.

Ohno Wins Sundance Fellowship

Kazu Ohno, S01/12, was chosen last month as one of five filmmakers to receive the first fellowships from the Sundance Institute’s Film Fellowship Program. The fellowships, established in April with a $5 million grant from the Annenberg Foundation, provide two-year stipends, residencies and creative support to help participants complete their films.

Ohno, who grew up in Toyoa and New York, is working on a film called Mr. Crumpacker and The Man From the Letter. According to Ohno, the film is a comedy about a boss who wants to turn his company into “a place of philosophical inquiry.”

Quotable Columbia

“Presidents love their legacies. They start planning them long before they leave office—sometimes before they even enter it. They dream in advance of their places in history, and they scheme to make sure that their own versions of events are the ones that prevail.”