Quotable Columbians: Opposing Viewpoints on the Economy

“Political scarrmaging about the health of jobs and incomes is off base. Our economy isn’t just tremen- dously productive, it’s a powerhouse of job creation. Since 1979, US labor pro- ductivity has increased an astonishing 67 percent, while 40 million new jobs were added. Now I’m not saying no jobs were lost. The international competi- tion, changes in consumer and business buying patterns, and corporate reorgan- ization did lead to layoffs. But retail- markets for risk capital and emerging firms and industries provided many new jobs as well.”

—Glen Hahblad, dean of the Graduate School of Business, former chair of President Bush’s Council of Economic Advisers, speaking recently on Min- neapolis Public Radio’s Marketplace.

A tax cut not designed to stimu- late the economy but rather to benefit the richest Americans has done what its criti- cism forecast: It has deepened the growing gap between rich and poor and created huge deficits—costs that are financed only by a modulus of stimulus to the economy. No wonder then that job cre- ation did not only fail to keep up with new entrants to the labor force, but has there been a net loss of 2.5 million jobs from the administration for the first time since the Great Depression, a loss of close to 1 million jobs.


Researchers Find Reason Dietary Fat Increases Alzheimer’s Risk

“A new report has uncovered another way dietary fat may increase the risk of Alzheimer’s disease, mark- ing too much fat a double whammy for the brain’s cells.”

“...a likely role of looking at Alzheimer’s disease and it opens up a whole new way to approach the dis- ease therapeutically,” says the study’s senior author, Neil Shachter, associate professor of medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Though the connection between fats and Alzheimer’s disease initially looked researchers by surprise, it’s now so accepted that clinical trials are testing whether statines, choles- terol-lowering drugs, can prevent the disease.

The rationale behind the trials comes from studies that show that cholesterol increases the amount of beta-amyloid, the molecule most researchers believe is the primary cause of the disease.

In the new research, published in the Sept. 16 issue of the Journal of Lipid Research, Shachter found that another component of dietary fat, triglycerides, also increases the amount of betaamyloid inside cells, but in a different way than cholesterol.

A worldwide effort to find drugs that limit the activity of presenilin is already under way. Shachter says he’s looking for new findings may lead to milder treatments than the cell of excess presenilin altogether, by decreasing fat delivery.

New Associate Dean For Translational Research Named

Columbia University Medical Center has announced the appoint- ment of Eric R. Rosenthal, MD as associate dean for Translational Research. This is a newly created position at the Medical Center, which is one of the first medical institutions to create such a role. Rosenthal is also chairman of the Department of Surgery, the Morris and Rose Ritvo, and Johnson and Johnson Professor of Surgery at Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons.

Translational research bridges scientific discovery and clinical deliv- ery, with the ultimate goal to suc- cessfully introduce novel diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive approach- es to illness. One of the primary ben- efits of translational research is enabling nonprofit medical institu- tions, such as Columbia, to retain intellectual capital over new tech- nologies and therapies developed by its researchers.

“I am honored to be appointed to this new role, which is a measure of Columbia’s leadership in medical innovation,” said Rosenthal. “I will be working to expand the classic defini- tion of translational research—trans- ferring laboratory research into implementing in patients in real care—to include the creation of new commu- nication channels that will encourage medical professionals to take obser- vations from patients back to the lab- oratory for clinical modeling.”

Google Founders Receive Marconi Foundation’s Highest Honor

Sergey Brin and Larry Page, who as Stanford graduate students creat- ed the Google search engine, have been named the 2004 Fellows of the Marconi Foundation at Columbia University. In announcing their selec- tion, John Jay Marks, the Foun- dation’s president, congratulated the two men for that invention that has fundamentally changed the way infor- mation is accessed.

“Brin and Page will join a select cadre of 32 of the world’s most influ- ential communications technology pioneers, who since 1975 have been awarded the honor named for Guglielmo Marconi, inventor of the Nobel Prize for pioneering wire- less transmissions.”

Tim Berners-Lee, 2002 Marconi Fellowship recipient and architect of the World Wide Web, said, “Google held a mirror up to us, reflecting the world in a few tiny actions of linking as a set of concepts which society has discussed and sought.”

“Sergey and Larry Page developed the Google search engine to answer the world’s thirst for incessant amounts of information; efficiently respond to hundreds of millions of daily online queries, instantaneously return relevant results and reach users on countless platforms. These two talented men have brought a sense of order to the overwhelming black hole of the World Wide Web,” according to Guglielmo Marconi’s great-grandson and Foundation chairman, Francesco Paesano Marconi. Brin said, “On behalf of Google, Larry and I are honored to be recip- ients of the Marconi Fellowships. This honor is a testimony of Google’s mission, to organize the world’s infor-

Social Work’s New Home

Columbia’s School of Social Work has a new home. Completed and opened in August, the 11-story, 144,800-square-foot facility is located at 1255 Amsterdam Ave. between West 121st Street and Morningside Ave. on the northeast campus of the college. The building is the school’s fifth location in its 106-year history and has 12 classrooms, many of them outfitted with state-of-the-art audiovisual and computer equip- ment. It also houses a 500-seat computer lab, a 7,000-square-foot library, breakfast/role play rooms and student meeting rooms.

The building is more than fresh paint and new furniture, explains Dean Jeanette Takamura. “A lot of thought went into how to incorporate technology. We also looked at every possible way to forward the dis- course of our work and decided to use art,” she says. In addition to the school’s permanent collection of artwork, an exhibit titled “Moving Walls” is turning heads and drawing positive feedback. The photographs tell the story of a Brooklyn youth who was later gunned down as well as illustrate the impact of HIV/AIDS on, particularly children, in Middle Eastern cultures.

“Students, faculty and alumni are all very excited about the building. It will help us increase interdisciplinary research and focus on our mis- sion,” notes Takamura.

Columbia Finance Makes Two Appointments

Executive Vice President for Finance Al Horvath has made two new additions to Columbia’s finance team. Patricia E. Scipio joined the university on Oct. 27, and Cheryl A. Ross will join as controller on Oct. 25. “We are lucky to have convinced Cheryl Ross to join our new team at Columbia,” said Horvath, and “I’m excited that Pat has agreed to join our financial leadership team.”

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