W hen Columbia College sopho-
more Wendy Francois checks her email, she sits through the yawning loops for emails from Jeb Bush. Yes, the real Florida governor, W's younger brother. The two friends met when Francois, from Naranja, Florida, was destroyed by Hurricane Andrew, and she couldn't return to the wreckage, in effort, which Francois participated. They met several times at various functions. When Francois forged a relationship with Gov. Bush that continues today, one example of the leadership quality that defines her life.

As a student at Homestead High, Francois was varsity captain of her volleyball team. She graduated with a perfect GPA, garnered a National Achievement Scholarship, and was the class salutatorian. She also found the time to tutor and mentor third-graders, teach a Sunday school class and actively participate in the Kiwanis Key Club, National Honor Society and Haitian Culture Club. A weekly radio show that she founded and produced—H.I.T.—or Haitian Youth Time—broadcasted on Radio R.C.H. out of Miami-Dade County.

According to news in recognition of her activism began to stack up: a Presidential Congo Scholarship for academic excellence and academic achievement and a Robert E. Hunter scholarship for academic excellence.

Francois also was a participant in The Apprentice, a show in the College Board and Gov. Bush, the organization aims to promote educational excellence and university readiness for high school students and prepare them for success in higher education. In her senior year, Francois was selected to introduce keynote speaker Edwidge Danticat, BC’90, at the College Board Forum’s third annual Awards given in recognition of her leadership skills Francois honed in high school are very much in evidence at Columbia. She worked on voter registration drives in the weeks leading up to the presidential election and is a member of Double Discovery Student Organization (DDSO), a student group that provides tutors and mentors for the University’s Double Discovery Center. The center provides high school enrichment programs aimed largely at Harlem youth. Program participants graduate from high school and college at a rate significantly higher than the national average.

Francois attributes her achievements to pride in her Haitian heritage. Although she was born in Miami, her parents were born in Haiti and Creole is the primary language spoken at home. In an article that she penned for Haiti Progrès—a weekly newspaper distributed in New York City; Miami; Ft. Lauderdale; Florida; Boston; Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; Montreal; Ottawa; Paris, and Haiti—Francois wrote of the need for recognition of the heritage and history of Haiti in achievements. "Hope will be absorbed into the roots that anchor Haitian youth, and dreams will propel them to excel and succeed in spite of financial hardship, family divisions, cultural isolation and all other circumstances."

"I chose Columbia because I felt that the school and the city’s diversity were [what] I needed at [that] time in my life."

—Wendy Francois

The Reality of Reality Television

By Hayley Miller

The Business School Media Management and Association and the Law School Kernochan Center for Law, Media, and the Arts sponsored a panel titled “Reality TV: The Genre,” which explored the challenges that reality television—the fastest-growing genre of television programming—has placed on the business model. Unlike traditional sitcoms, shows such as The Apprentice and The Bachelor have limited syndication potential. Once Donald Trump barracks: ‘You’re fired,” on the finale of The Apprentice, the suspense is gone—and consequently, so is the desire to renew such shows as an entertainment guarantee. Major companies have increased their capital expenditures in the genre and have invested in new forms of reality television. In an effort to protect themselves, networks require extensive background checks. Former Apprentice producer of MTV’s Made, Boling Points and Camp Jim and NBC’s Home Intervention Panelist Bill Rancic, the first-season winner of Donald Trump's reality show The Apprentice, shared his data for contestants with troublesome pasts to slip through the cracks despite intensive background checks. Marci Wiseman, president of Wiseman & Associates and a consultant to NBC Universal Television Network and Cable Group, is the most popular and respected of the panelists. Wiseman told the audience that contestants with troublesome pasts are not aware they are being filmed, and contestants may not know to review criminal records or past addresses is omitted, the network may not know to review criminal records in the omitted state. This has caused tremendous embarrassment for contestants previously involved in criminal activity. Wiseman explained that contestants have a higher salary and have their own drivers, which may not be the case for contestants with troubled pasts.

Despite news reports indicating that the popularity of reality programming has waned, the panelists concurred that it remains a significant factor in the entertainment industry. According to the research, reality programming is the most popular genre of television programming—has surpassed the popularity of traditional business models. Wiseman added, “There’s a reason television’s leading execu-
tives are enamored of reality television, as it allows the network to reduce costs and provide a major source of income with traditional business models. The panelists, who included prominent executives and consultants from NBC, MTV and FOX, indicated that programmes are therefore becoming more reliant on produ-
tions such as humidity and temperature, which vary from experiment to experiment. However, researchers uncovered the potential for the chemical genetics approach—a batch process that per-
rates such as humidity and temperature, which vary from experiment to experiment. However, researchers uncovered the potential for the chemical genetics approach—a batch process that per-

SLIMS analyzes raw data using algorithms and generates graphical displays.

Pioneering Student Finds Strength in Her Heritage

By Sherr W. Whited and Juan Kane

Inspiration Awards luncheon. Danticat, who came to the United States from Haiti in 1981 when she was 12, is a celebrated novelist and shares the same Haitian heritage as Francois.

With so much invested in her commu-
nity, it’s perhaps surprising that Francois decided to attend college so far away. But Columbia captured her attention and held her. After visiting other colleges, including Yale and Cornell, Francois made a decision. “I chose Columbia because I felt that the school and the city’s diversity were [what] I needed at [that] time in my life,” she says.

The leadership skills Francois honed in high school are very much in evidence at Columbia. She worked on voter registration drives in the weeks leading up to the presidential election and is a member of Double Discovery Student Organization (DDSO), a student group that provides tutors and mentors for the University’s Double Discovery Center. The center provides high school enrichment programs aimed largely at Harlem youth. Program participants graduate from high school and college at a rate significantly higher than the national average.

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S pinal muscular atrophy (SMA), a fatal pediatric genetic disease, is the leading genetic killer of infants. The disease is prevalent around the world but particularly affects children in developing countries in Western Europe. Currently, no treatment exists. But by using a newly developed technology, a team of Columbia researchers has uncovered that indisopropenol, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) similar in chemical structure to the over-the-counter pain medication ibuprofen, may increase the production of survival motor neuron (SMN) protein, the deficiency of which is believed to cause the disease.

It is the scientists’ hope that the discovery will lead to additional developments and even a treatment for SMA. The disease is marked by progressive degeneration of motor neurons that originate in the spinal cord and occurs in different severities with an incidence of one in 6,000 live births. Although the location of the gene mutation believed responsible for the disease has been known for years, researchers have yet to uncover the connection between the deficiency of SMN protein and the onset of the disease.

‘Indisopropenol is now both a chemical tool that researchers can use to study this disease and also a therapeutic candidate for this children,” said Brent R. Stockwell, assistant professor in biological sciences and chemistry. This latest research was conducted at Stockwell Lab and is published in the November issue of the journal Chemistry & Biology in two separate articles. "Indisopropenol: A Chemical Tool, the Survival Motor Neuron Protein through a Cyclooxygenase-Independent Mechanism” and “A Flexible Data Analysis Tool for Chemical Phenotyping” Mitchell R. Linn, senior research staff assistant and lead researcher on the study on indisopropenol, said the next step would be experiments to understand its mechanism of action, to deliver the drug to the spinal cord and to test the toxicity of related drug molecules. A clinical trial for its effectiveness in treating SMA could follow.

Despite the structural similarity of indisopropenol and indisopropenol, researchers found that indisopropenol and other NSAIDs had no effect on increasing the production of SMN protein, unlike indisopropenol which uncovered the potential for indisopropenol to increase the production of SMN, by testing more than 47,000 compounds using a high-throughput chemical genetics approach—a batch process that per-