Richard Fisher Named Chairman Of the American Assembly

By Joseph Kennedy

The American Assembly, an affiliate of Columbia, has appointed Richard W. Fisher, managing partner of Kissinger McLarty Associates in Washington, DC, as chairman of the Board of Trustees.

“Richard Fisher is a dynamic leader and is well known and respected in the policy area and financial world throughout Asia, Europe, Latin and North America on diverse issues,” said Columbia President Lee Bollinger, who is also a trustee of the American Assembly.

“He brings a reputation for creativity and charisma that will invigorate the Assembly’s activities.”

From 1997 to 2001, Fisher was Deputy United States Trade Representative, holding the rank of Deputy United States Trade Representative, with responsibility for NAFTA, overseeing the Free Trade Area for the Americas, initiated Free Trade Agreements with Chile and Singapore, led the U.S.-Japan Enhanced Initiative on Deregulation and Competition, negotiated the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Agreement, and served as U.S. trade official for NAFTA, overseeing the Free Trade Area for the Americas, initiated Free Trade Agreements with Chile and Singapore, led the U.S.-Japan Enhanced Initiative on Deregulation and Competition, negotiated the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Agreement.

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Columbians at the Academy Awards

When the curtain rises for the 75th Academy Awards at the Kodak Theatre on Sunday, March 23, Murray Nossel, Ph.D. ’80/1 and adjunct social work professor, and Bill Condon, CC’76, will be among those hoping to take home an Oscar.

• Nossel’s film Why Can’t We Be a Family Again?, is nominated for Best Short Documentary. The film tells the story of two boys who are being raised by their grandmother while their mother battles her addiction to crack. The boys dream of a day when their family will be reunified.

• Condon is nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for Chicago. He was also nominated for a Golden Globe this year. This marks Condon’s second trip to the Oscars. In 1998 he won for the screenplay Gods & Monsters.

• Film professor Michael Hausman produced Gangs of New York, which is nominated for 10 Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

—Kristin Sterling

Nayar Delivers University Lecture

Shire Nayar, above, the T.C. Chang Professor of Computer Science at the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, gave the University Lecture last month in Low Library. Nayar introduced the computational camera, a device that embodies the convergence of the camera and the computer. Using unconventional optics, it selects light rays from a scene in radically different ways and a suitable algorithm to manipulate the selected rays to produce new forms of visual information. Nayar demonstrated to audience members how the computational camera reddefines the very notion of an image, and hence has the potential to impact the very nature of communication.

Wynton Marsalis Plays a Little Duke

Legendary jazz artist Wynton Marsalis plays several cues from Duke Ellington’s long-form piece “Ellington in Harlem” in a dynamic exchange with students in Stanley Crouch’s interdisciplinary course “African American Texts: Ellington,” offered through the department of English and the Center for Jazz Studies. Here, during one of many jaunts to the piano that afternoon, Marsalis encourages students to listen for the development of a recurring musical theme.

By Hayley Miller

Leading human rights scholars, activists and other experts, including past United Nations (UN) High Commissioners for Human Rights and the current High Commissioner, gathered for a symposium recently to examine the history of the first ten years of the Office, its achievements and the challenges ahead.

Sergio Vieira de Mello, a Brazilian national who has been UN High Commissioner for Human Rights since September 2002, was joined by Mary Robinson, the former president of Ireland (1990-1997) who was High Commissioner from 1997 to 2002, and is currently the executive director of the Ethical Globalization Initiative, and José Ayala-Lassoo, the first UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (1994-1997) and currently the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador and Ecuadorian Ambassador to France.

The speakers noted the increased attention to the condition of human rights in specific countries, and issues related to race and development in human rights framework, since the Office’s inception. The Symposium also provided a forum for human rights leaders to look at how human rights issues — such as preventing violations of human rights, accountability and justice, economic and social rights, globalization, and development — can be integrated into the global agenda. Participants also looked at the role of special populations, including women, children, HIV/AIDS, indigenous peoples, minorities, and migrants.

The speakers and guests included three High Commissioners, for his commitment to human rights.

The symposium, which was hosted by Columbia Law School and the SUR-Human Rights University Network and supported by the United Nations Foundation, marked the first time that all three High Commissioners were brought together.

For more detailed information, including speaker list and biographies, agenda, and background papers, please visit: http://www.law.columbia.edu/html/ysmposium/main.html.

International Experts Examine Achievements of U.N. Office of Commissioner for Human Rights