

ILRIe

Alumni Magazine

WINTER 2019





GIVING MATTERS. "IT CHANGES EVERYTHING."

— Dean Alexander J.S. Colvin, Ph.D. '99

Jennifer Flores '22 and Neeraj Jaisinghani '19 study at ILR's Catherwood Library.



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Alumni, Parents and Friends,

Thank you all for the kindness and good wishes you've sent me on my appointment as dean of ILR. Your support has been incredible and I am excited and hopeful for what the future will bring.

This semester has been amazing. Having worked directly with our students, I can attest that we have some of the best and brightest individuals we've ever had across undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. Our faculty challenges them, and they challenge each other, to learn and grow. They take every opportunity to engage with ILR and the university to get the most out of their time as students.

As an alumnus, I have a unique perspective from having attended ILR as a Ph.D. student and now serving ILR as dean. I've witnessed firsthand the impact that giving can make on ILR students. As a member of the faculty, I've benefited greatly from the generosity of donors who supported my research and teaching. As dean of ILR, I have a more global view of why giving matters to our school. In short, it changes everything.

Your giving provides opportunities to students who may not otherwise have them. It enables research that could lead to important changes in policy and practice. And, it supports our mission of outreach to help make an impact on the future of work.

Thanks for all you do to support our incredible school.

All my best,

Alexander J.S. Colvin, Ph.D. '99
Kenneth F. Kahn '69 Dean
Martin F. Scheinman '75, M.S. '76, Professor

COVER PHOTO

Christy Pambianchi '90, center left, and Beth Florin, M.S. '85, center right, met this fall with ILR Women's Caucus executive board members, from left, Hannah Schmelkin '22, Anika Fischer '23, Natalee Robayo '22 and Selin Edeballi '20.

COLLABORATING WITH WEILL

“Home health aides are so important. They spend significant amounts of meaningful time with patients ... Researching this important relationship will ultimately bring about better care.”

— Douglas Wigdor

Weill Cornell Medicine and ILR School faculty are building bridges between the two colleges through research on how the working conditions of low-wage health care workers impact patient care.

ILR Associate Dean of Outreach Ariel Avgar, Ph.D. '08, and Dr. Madeline Sterling, A&S '08, are examining how working conditions affect low-wage frontline health care workers in New York and the care they deliver to patients.

The research has been made possible through the support of New York City-based employment lawyer Douglas H. Wigdor of the law firm Wigdor LLP. A member of the Scheinman Institute Board of Advisors, he hopes the interdisciplinary research will encourage more collaboration.

“Home health aides are so important. They spend significant amounts of meaningful time with patients, but they have not been the focus of studies regarding the quality of care. Researching this important relationship will ultimately bring about better care,” said Wigdor, whose son, Jacob, is a Hotel School junior.

Avgar explained how ILR and Weill Medicine expertise has been coupled.

“Dr. Sterling brings expertise on the clinical side as a physician scientist who conducts research on the role of home health aides in chronic disease management, and I've done a

great deal of research on working conditions in hospitals and nursing homes from an employment relations perspective.”

“We're going to look at the research we've done separately to see if we can leverage our data and explore cross-cutting themes. Our work together will also generate novel data from both categories of workers,” said Avgar, an associate professor.

Sterling, an internist and health services researcher who is also a Weill Medicine assistant professor, said she hopes the project improves integration of low-wage workers into patients' medical care teams.

“Home care workers spend more time with patients than doctors or nurses. In fact, they are often the minute-to-minute observers of patients' health. But, it is rare that these observations ever get transmitted to the patients' medical team or that workers feel like they are a part of the team. I think that needs to change,” Sterling said.

“Low-wage front line health care workers are crucial to delivering care,” Avgar said, but are often ignored within health care and by researchers. “There's a misperception that they are not central to patient care,” he said.

Sterling first contacted Avgar in 2018 after reading his survey of nursing home employees. That phone call sparked a series of conversations on the topic.

Continued on Page 4



Douglas Wigdor, left, Dr. Madeline Sterling, A&S '08, and Associate Professor Ariel Avgar, Ph.D. '08, met recently at ILR's NYC headquarters.

AVGAR TAPPED TO LEAD OUTREACH

"I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH MY COLLEAGUES AS WE CONTINUE TO BUILD ON OUR TRADITION OF ENGAGING WITH AND CONTRIBUTING TO AN EVOLVING WORLD OF WORK."



ILR Associate Dean of Outreach
Ariel Avgar, Ph.D. '08

Associate Professor Ariel Avgar, Ph.D. '08, is leading ILR Outreach after being appointed to the associate dean post in August by Dean Alex Colvin.

A widely published employment relations scholar, Avgar oversees ILR institutes and programs impacting thousands of people every year.

ILR Outreach areas include disability and employment, conflict resolution, worker rights, economic development, union leadership, workplace sexual harassment and employment training for individuals involved with the criminal justice system. Outreach extends ILR research and education by engaging with individuals, communities and labor, management and public policy leaders. As a land-grant college, ILR is particularly engaged with contributing to research, practice and policy in New York state.

"I am looking forward to working with my colleagues as we continue to build on our tradition of engaging with and contributing to an evolving world of work," Avgar said.

Part of the Scheinman Institute's leadership, Avgar focuses his research on two areas of employment relations – health care and conflict management.

He investigates the impact of health care workplace innovations, including new technology, delivery of care models and work practices, on patients, frontline employees and organizational performance.

Avgar's study of conflict and its management by organizations is aimed at a better understanding of the consequences of conflict for employees and employers.



Collaborating with Weill Continued from Page 2

"I think we make a good partnership and complement each other very well," Sterling said. "Ariel has tremendous expertise in unions, organizational culture and workplace issues, which is such an asset to the sort of research I am aiming to conduct."

Avgar said he and Sterling, who are members of the Cornell Center for Health

Equity, a university and Weill Medicine initiative that will help foster their collaboration, have similar questions and interests, but come at it with different disciplinary lenses. "It's been a very informative relationship and Dr. Sterling has been an amazing colleague to work with. We're proving that there is a lot of potential in this type of collaboration between the schools."

INEQUALITY AND WORK

Theme Project



Phoebe Strom, M.S. '18/Ph.D. '21, left, and Kate Ryan '20.

ILR Community Researching Inequality

The New York City labor movement, sexual harassment and criminal records are among the 22 projects receiving funding through our 2019-20 Inequality and Work theme project. This is the third year that ILR students, staff, faculty and alumni have explored a theme through research projects, schoolwide workshops and other activities.

"The school's annual theme project has been an effective way to bring the ILR community together and to generate new research or synergies to more fully understand a topic that impacts work and workers alike," said Kara Lombardi, assistant dean for student experience and well-being.

Among the grant winners is Phoebe Strom, M.S. '18/Ph.D. '21, who is using the award to further her research on sexual harassment in the workplace. Her project, "Drawing the Line: How Workplace Experiences Influence Individual Perceptions of Sexual Harassment,"

grew out of an independent research project by Kate Ryan '20.

"It was a very #MeToo time and sexual harassment was being given a lot of attention," Ryan said.

Ryan, whose mother, Cathy Creighton '87, is a lawyer, was fascinated by how people define sexual harassment "in their own heads and how they use that definition in the workplace."

"I came at it from the law standpoint because there are laws about sexual harassment," Ryan said. "So, why do people see it so differently when there is this set definition in the law?"

With the guidance of Strom and Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Outreach Ariel Avgar, Ph.D. '08, Ryan created a survey using sexual harassment vignettes that featured a range of severity that would be used to further her work.

After the duo analyzed the survey results, Strom produced an initial paper in which she concluded that workplace factors mattered in perceptions of sexual harassment more than any other factor.

Strom will use the grant to interview individuals about their experiences with workplace sexual harassment and plans to submit her paper for publication.

"The survey results can't tell us the individual processes by which the workplace is affecting a person's cognition around sexual harassment," Strom said. "These interviews will allow us to see how the workplace is affecting a person's definition of sexual harassment. By interviewing them, we can ask about their definition of sexual harassment, and see how they came up with it, and what in their workplace experiences has influenced it."



Marlene Blumin, CALS Ph.D. '88

DRIVING IMPACT

MARLENE BLUMIN

CALS PHD 1988

Blumin Helps Graduate Students Thrive

Marlene Blumin, CALS Ph.D. '88, who earned a minor in organizational behavior at ILR and a doctorate in education at Cornell, has dedicated her life to students.

In a classroom and educational administration career spanning nearly 50 years, she has noticed the profound changes internships make on students. "They develop incredible professional and social skills," she said. "But, internships can be unpaid. And, they often come with additional transportation or housing costs, which not everyone can afford."

To remove financial concerns from the experience, she created the Marlene F. Blumin '88 Graduate Internship Support Fund.

This is not her first foray into philanthropy. Since the 1990s, Marlene has endowed five scholarships and one internship – honoring her mother, father, brother and sister – at a variety of institutions. Each has a different purpose.

"I wanted something permanent for them, because they were very much behind who I am," said Marlene, who "was raised to give back – either with time or resources."

"There are just so many toys you can buy," she said. "They don't give me the pleasure I get from knowing a student will benefit. Whenever I get a thank you note from a student, it makes me feel fantastic."

Before earning her doctorate, she was a Head Start teacher in East Harlem, a reading consultant in the East Syracuse Minoa School District, a consultant at Tompkins-Seneca BOCES and taught at Tompkins-Cortland Community College. Sensing that "something was missing" in the skills she would need as

"The ILR classes I took sharpened my skills and made me much more confident in where I wanted to go creatively."

After earning her doctorate, Marlene joined Syracuse University's School of Education, where she taught for 30 years. There, she developed "College Learning Strategies," a course that "teaches students how to be students. Students learn how to understand the curriculum of their courses, as well as acquire the executive skills that will carry them through college, career and life."

Since receiving emerita status in 2017, she continues to teach the course through Syracuse University Project Advance, which offers SU courses in high schools. And, she is working on revisions to the eighth, and final, edition of "It's All About Choices: Recipes for Academic Success," the textbook she developed for the course.

In 2018, SU honored her with the Tolley Medal for scholarship and leadership in lifelong learning.

Marlene said her greatest reward for a career in teaching "is hearing from former students and learning about their successes. I am always honored, years after graduation, that they continue to share their achievements with me."

**"WHENEVER I GET
A THANK YOU NOTE
FROM A STUDENT,
IT MAKES ME FEEL
FANTASTIC."**

— Marlene Blumin,
CALS Ph.D. '88

an administrator, she started taking graduate-level courses at Cornell. Soon, she was persuaded to continue on for her doctorate.

What was missing was an understanding of an environmental and organizational context, which she gained through her studies at ILR. "I wanted to see organizational behavior in the context in which I was working – school districts, then community colleges, then universities."

160

OUT OF 3,218
AT CORNELL

52.5%

FEMALE

47.5%

MALE

7

COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

21

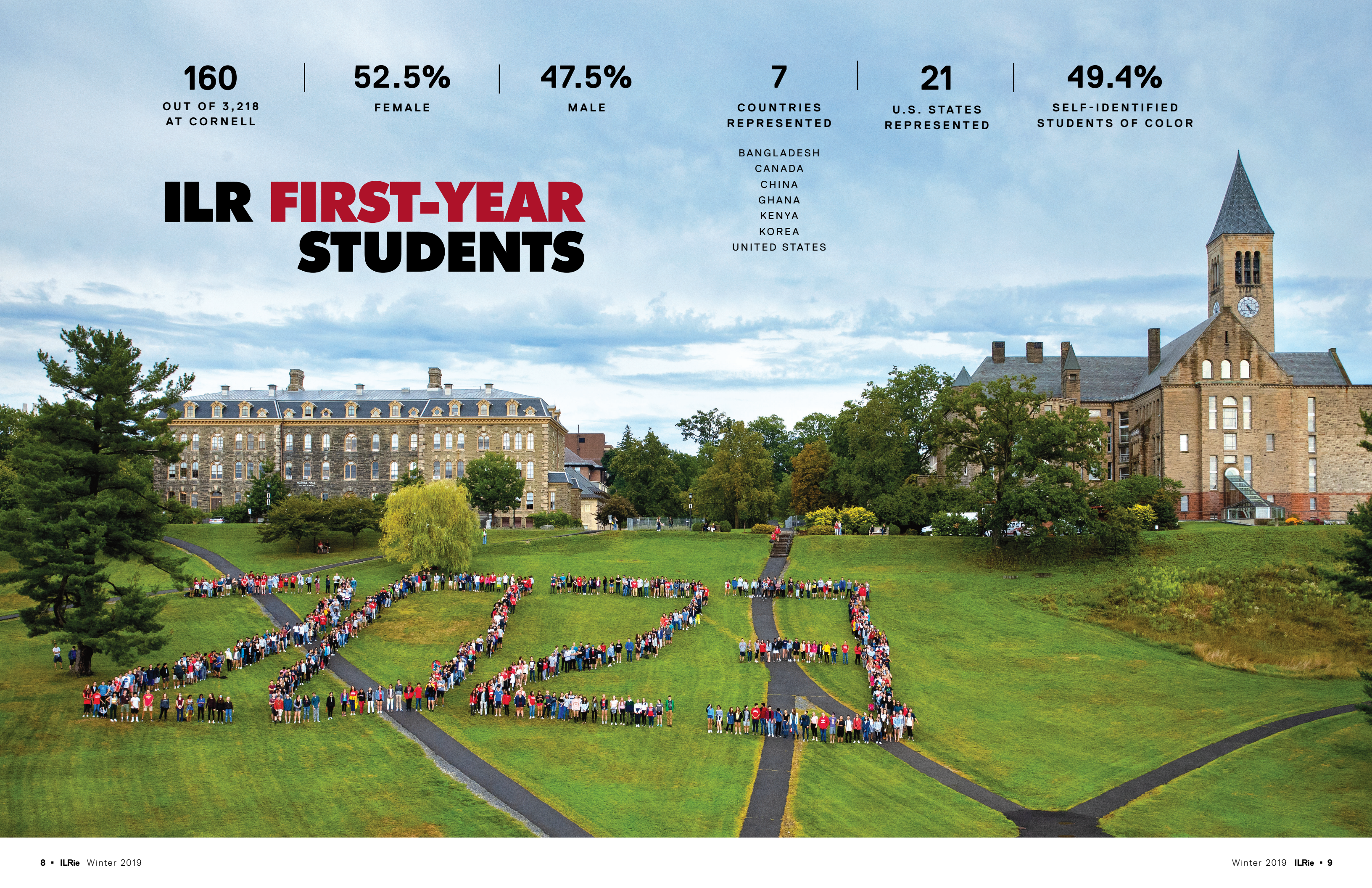
U.S. STATES
REPRESENTED

49.4%

SELF-IDENTIFIED
STUDENTS OF COLOR

ILR **FIRST-YEAR** STUDENTS

BANGLADESH
CANADA
CHINA
GHANA
KENYA
KOREA
UNITED STATES





The Multiplier Effect

“You get involved with one thing, and then something else, and it just kind of grows. I enjoy giving back to the school.”

Adam Weinstein, CHE '88, and Dawn Levy-Weinstein '88, are shown with their daughter, Katie Weinstein, CHE '22.

“Cornell is a special place for our family,” Dawn said. The couple met on campus as first-year students. Daughter Katie is a sophomore in the College of Human Ecology; son Spencer graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences in 2019 and son Trevor is a senior in high school.

After earning a law degree at Hofstra University, Levy-Weinstein served as an associate attorney for Raff & Becker LLP in New York, practicing labor and employment law, and was a labor relations specialist for SUNY Downstate Medical Center.

She left the workforce for several years to raise children, returning in 2017 as an attorney in The Law Office of Delmas A. Costin, Jr.; Costin is a 1993 ILR grad.

“We clicked right away, and I think it was because of our ILR connection,” she said. “We have that same educational background, and that same commitment to helping employees whose rights have been violated.”

As she became more involved with the ILR Alumni Association, Dawn noticed the need for a women’s group. In 2016, she founded the ILRAA Women’s Council, which she has chaired ever since. The group meets twice a year at the ILR New York City Conference Center and is open to ILR alumni, students and guests.

Absetou Diakite '21, who plans to become a social entrepreneur, owes her 2018 summer job at Costin’s law office to a Women’s Council meeting she attended that spring – and to the connection she made with Dawn.

“I was blessed to work in an environment with supportive mentors who showed a dedication to my learning and growth,” Diakite said. “Delmas and Dawn showed me what great and effective leaders and mentors look like. I hope to pay it forward someday and provide an opportunity for others as they did for me.”

Among other volunteer activities, Dawn serves on the board of directors of the ILR Alumni Association, as a Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador and, with her husband, on the Cornell Parents Committee.

“You get involved with one thing, and then something else, and it just kind of grows,” she said. “I enjoy giving back to the school.”

For Dawn Levy-Weinstein '88 and her husband, Adam Weinstein, CHE '88, once was not enough.

First, they established a scholarship for College of Human Ecology students. If no student qualified in a given year, the scholarship could then be awarded to an ILR student. In the scholarship’s first five years, an ILR student was the recipient just once.

Now, they have created the Dawn Levy-Weinstein and Adam Weinstein Scholarship, specifically for ILR students.

“Dawn and I share a passion for increasing diversity and providing opportunities for upward mobility through education,” Adam said. “Too many students are unable to access educational opportunities because of financial challenges. We’re delighted to help solve this dilemma on a long-term basis, one student at a time, through endowed scholarships at Cornell.”

DRIVING IMPACT

DAWN LEVY-WEINSTEIN

1988



ALPERN AWARD WINNER

BARRY BECK

GROAT &
ALPERN
AWARDS
2020

By the time Barry Beck '90 was 10 years old, the 2020 Alpern Award winner had contracts with everyone in his neighborhood to shovel their snow.

His entrepreneurial spirit was just getting started.

"This was my first taste of success and I became a devoted serial entrepreneur, starting business after business," Barry said. "Landscaping, window washing, car detailing, retail and office maintenance and construction. I was always looking for more scale, continuing to find my way into bigger opportunities, picking up steam in my new ventures throughout high school – and later in college."

As a junior at Cornell, Barry, along with his brother and a friend, founded Tower Systems, a chain store management company that eventually counted Starbucks and Bank of America among its clients.

The team built the company into the largest of its kind, with revenues at its peak of more than \$500 million. Despite the tremendous success, Barry wasn't happy and began meeting with potential buyers. As luck would have it, the company was eventually sold to EMCOR Group, the Fortune 500 company, and Barry met the future Mrs. Beck – Marla Malcolm.

"I met Marla at an investment banking meeting set up for the purpose of selling the business," he said. "She was so incredibly impressive; she knocked me off my feet. That meeting changed the course of my life. My report back to the board of directors was simply, 'I think I met the girl I am going to marry.'"

Marla, who was also ready for a new challenge, left the investment firm and joined Barry in launching a luxury beauty e-commerce site. They raised \$1 million from investors in just two weeks and were on their way.

Then, the Nasdaq crashed, venture capital dried up and Bluemercury was left with just \$150,000 in the bank.

The couple quickly realized that the best way to save the business was to combine the online company with a

physical store and purchased EFX in Georgetown. They continued to build the company and their relationship simultaneously, and just after the opening of their fourth Bluemercury store, they married.

Within two decades, Bluemercury became so successful that Macy's purchased the company, which is still independently operated by the Becks, for \$210 million. Now with 190 stores in 26 states, the Becks employ more than 2,000 "beauty junkies" – and it's those experts that Beck believes separate Bluemercury from its competitors.

"While at ILR, I felt fortunate to enjoy a few serendipitous junctures with Dean David B. Lipsky who, during our few brief interactions, imparted some key insights that became invaluable cornerstones for me," Barry said. "One such golden nugget, suggesting to always place your people first, became a company hallmark and fundamental component of our ability to revolutionize Main Street retail in America today. When I came into the cosmetics industry in 1999, the majority of employees were part-time workers. I thought, what would happen if I gave our staff full-time work, benefits and a true career path? By retaining full-time staff, we also retained their knowledge, customer relationships and expertise."

With a lifetime of experience at their fingertips, Barry and Marla are helping the next generation of entrepreneurs through the Beck Entrepreneurship Fellows Program. Entering its second year, it offers summer grants of \$5,000 so that Cornell students can work on their startups without needing additional employment.

Always looking for the next great venture for himself, Barry has founded Evenly Technologies, Inc., an oral wellness company.

"Entrepreneurship is the relentless pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled," he said.

"I know I've got one more global brand inside me."

KATHLEEN WESLOCK

GROAT &
ALPERN
AWARDS
2020

Kathleen Weslock, the 2020 recipient of the Groat Award, found ILR thanks to a 1971 winner – Eric Jensen '51.

They met when Kathleen was working for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as a training specialist and Eric was one of 30 executives attending her workshop on how to effectively lobby in Washington, D.C.

When the workshop ended, Eric – a Bethlehem Steel arbitration lawyer known on both sides of the table as a tough, but fair, negotiator – was so impressed with Kathleen that he sponsored her application to ILR.

“You never know who you’re going to meet, or how you can influence people,” said Kathleen, who earned her MILR degree in 1983. “And you never know where life is going to take you.”

Never were those sentiments more on display than during one week in 1981.

Kathleen, who majored in psychology and Spanish at Hood College, was just starting her Cornell career when she attended a “very posh wedding” for a Hood roommate at The Army and Navy Club in Washington, D.C. The next Saturday, she and a Cornell friend, “partner in crime” Karen Thompson, MILR '83, now a compliance officer with the National Labor Relations Board, donned antennae headbands and homemade “silver snail” costumes made of cardboard and spray paint. Off they went to protest with the ILR Women’s Caucus in support of the Cornell Eleven – a group of former female faculty members who were suing the university for claims of sex discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

“Cornell had won the ‘Silver Snail’ award for lack of promotions within higher education,” Kathleen explained. “So, we dressed up to make our point.” The award was sponsored by the Project on Equal Education Rights, a branch of the National Organization for Women.

While on the picket line, Kathleen crossed paths with another alum, a Cornell trustee whose wife had also graduated from Hood and “who had been a very dear friend of the bride’s mother.”

“So, here he had just seen me at this very elegant wedding in a bridesmaid dress and the next weekend he sees me dressed in a silver snail costume,” she said. “But, to his credit, he invited me into the trustee meeting and I got to talk about why we were so concerned as a group of students.”

Those are the connections, and the give and take, that were the hallmark of Kathleen’s time on campus.

“When I came to Cornell, what was fascinating to me was that the labor students and the management students, we all got along,” she said. “We all debated the issues. We all agreed to disagree, but we had respect for each other and that has carried me very well in the workplace.”

Throughout her career, Kathleen has used those principles to innovate in the world of human resources. An executive at major firms including Deloitte, SunGard Data Systems (now FIS), Shearman & Sterling and Cisco Systems, Kathleen is now the chief human resources officer at Livent Corporation. There, along with her team and colleagues, she has negotiated collective bargaining agreements in Argentina, brought top talent to key positions in the company and worked on the transformation of the business from a segment of a larger multinational to a successful stand-alone public, independent company.

“The best part of my job right now is teaching the next generation of HR leaders,” she said. “And, working with my leadership team, seeing what we could be as a company, focusing on our culture and our employee values.”

“Those are things I learned at Cornell. ILR really gave me the skills to do what I do.”





ILR LAUNCHES PODCAST

WORK 

Exploring the Future of Work, Labor and Employment

LGBTQ rights, neurodiversity inclusiveness and mandatory arbitration in sexual harassment are just a few of the topics being discussed in the ILR School's new podcast, "WORK! Exploring the future of work, labor and employment."











In each episode, Dean Alex Colvin and a guest discuss issues relevant to today's managers and workers.

"I think the podcast is a great way to reach a broader audience, which is part of our mission as part of New York state's land-grant university," Colvin said.

"And, I really enjoy doing it. Just hearing about the range of different issues that exist in our field, and talking to different experts, it's really interesting and I think it's something our alumni and students will also appreciate."

The podcast is available on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher and other platforms. Visit <http://work.ilr.cornell.edu> for options.

Subscribe to "WORK!" through these platforms:

-  Apple Podcasts
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-  TuneIn
-  Spotify
-  iHeartRadio
-  Stitcher
-  Overcast
-  Pocket Cast
-  Castbox
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DEAR ALUMNI, PARENTS AND FRIENDS,

Greetings from Ithaca!

For me, the best part about working for this amazing institution is meeting so many of you – alumni from the first class to recent graduates to parents and friends of ILR. It is truly a wonderful thing!

I met **Harriet Morel Oxman '48** in 2007. She was in touch with me to make plans for her 60th Reunion the following year. She also attended her 65th and 70th. Harriet was such an inspiration. I was struck by her passion and lifelong love for Cornell and ILR's Catherwood Library. Harriet was laid to rest in October; I was so honored to know her.

This fall, **Jennifer Mandelblatt '17**, co-founder and executive director of Platform, returned to campus to share her insights and support the work of women's organizations on campus.

And, speaking of women's organizations, the *ILRie* cover photo was taken this fall when **Beth Florin, M.S. '85**, and **Christy Pambianchi '90** gave a talk, "Mind the Gap: Navigating Gendered Wage Inequities," sponsored by the ILR Women's Caucus.

So many of you give back to ILR in many ways. This issue of *ILRie* highlights some of the recent philanthropy to ILR that directly impacts our students and faculty. There are so many examples – last year, more than 2,000 people made gifts to the school.

This is why giving matters: your philanthropy directly connects to our students and to the faculty who teach them. Your impact on these ILRies helps them, in turn, improve the lives of people worldwide.

This is our mission and your support really does matter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Sellen
Assistant Dean, ILR Alumni Affairs and Development
jds13@cornell.edu
607.255.5827



SAVE THE DATE

Alumni Association chapter events and contacts: www.ilr.cornell.edu/alumni

- APRIL 23 Groat and Alpern Awards - The Pierre, NYC
- JUNE 4-7 Reunion Weekend - Ithaca
- SEPT. 25-26 Homecoming, ILR 75th Anniversary Kickoff - Ithaca

ILRie is produced by ILR Communications and Marketing. Contributors include Heather Ainsworth, Robert Barker, Dave Burbank, Lindsay France, Carly Fuller, Sandi Mulconry, Brian Pappalardo, Jon Reis and Jesse Winter.



ILR School

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Many ILRies stopped by the 2019 Groat & Alpern Celebration photo booth, including, from left, Associate Director of Multicultural Affairs Jessie Mancilla, Office of Student Services; Clady Corona '19, Jaelle Sanon '19 and Terrill Malone '21.