Alumni

Mary Bassett, Claudia Rankine, and Other Alumni in the News

Winter 2016-17



Mary Bassett

New York City health commissioner **Mary Bassett ’79PS** won the Frank A. Calderone Prize, one of the most prestigious honors in the field of public health. Bassett is also an associate professor of epidemiology at Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health.

Jimmy Keyrouz ’16SOA and **Felecia Hunter ’13GS, ’16SOA** won the narrative-film Oscar at the 2016 Student Academy Awards this fall. Their film, *Nocturne in Black*, which was directed by Keyrouz and co-produced by Hunter, is about a

musician trying to rebuild his piano in a war-torn Middle Eastern neighborhood.

Authors **James McBride ’80JRN** and **Louis Menand ’80GSAS** were two of this year’s twelve National Humanities Medal winners. The award, which President Barack Obama ’83CC granted in a September ceremony at the White House, is the highest national recognition of achievement in the humanities. McBride is a novelist, memoirist, and biographer who won the 2013 National Book Award for his novel *The Good Lord Bird*. Menand is a critic, essayist, and professor of literature and language at Harvard University. Keyboardist, composer, and arranger **Dick Hyman ’48CC** was also honored this fall as a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Fellow, which comes with $25,000 and a tribute concert.

Jorge Daniel Veneciano ’06GSAS was named director of New York’s Museum of Arts and Design. A native of Argentina, Veneciano studied English and comparative literature at Columbia. He was most recently the executive director of El Museo del Barrio, in Harlem.

Claudia Rankine ’93SOA was named a 2016 MacArthur Fellow. Rankine, a professor of poetry at Yale University, is the author of five volumes of poetry, two plays, and several essays. Her most recent work, a book-length poem called *Citizen*, won the 2014 National Book Critics Circle Award in poetry and was a finalist for the 2014 National Book Award.

Mia Alvar ’07SOA won the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize for her debut story collection, *In the Country*. The prize is given annually by the University of Rochester to “promising but less established” women authors. Past winners include Toni Morrison, Ursula K. Le Guin ’52GSAS, and Ann Patchett.



Guide to school abbreviations

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