

## 2010-2011 Luce Scholars

### Theodore Alcorn

Ted Alcorn, a Gates Foundation Fellow at the Johns Hopkins University, is studying for an MHS in International Health at the Bloomberg School of Public Health and an MA in International Economics at the School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS). His academic focus is on systems-design for the provision of social services such as health care and water supply. He has a BFA in Film & Television Production from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and helped produce Ken Burns' documentary miniseries *The War*, about the American experience during the Second World War. He also helped found the Voices of Rwanda genocide testimony archive and worked as a cameraman in Kigali recording the testimonies of survivors there. An avid photographer, he has conducted ethnographic research on rural water supply in Ghana, and is currently consulting at the World Bank on papers about spatial disparities in health care in the Middle East and pharmaceutical policy in Central America. He speaks Spanish proficiently and is working on his Chinese.

### Alexander Baron

Alex Baron is a political science and psychology major at the Washington University in St. Louis. Passionate about the educational process in the United States and aware of its substantial problems, he is dedicated to working towards educational policy reform. His interest in education led him to a summer teaching internship at Exeter Academy in New Hampshire and a teaching assistantship at Washington University. At WU, he was elected vice president of the senior class. In addition, he started a Men's Therapy group in St. Louis' only psychosocial rehabilitation center, and worked at the Center for National Policy in Washington, D.C. Alex lived with his family in Japan and Yemen in his early years before relocating to Bethesda, Maryland. In high school, his basketball team won its first-ever state championship. His rock band recorded multiple albums, and his school chamber choir won an international competition during his senior year. His interest in music (piano, drums, a cappella singing, rock band) has continued during college and he helped his basketball team win its first NCAA National Championship.

### Blair Benham-Pyle

Blair Benham-Pyle is in her final year as a Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry Major at Yale University and expects to earn her joint BS/MS degree in May 2010. She is a member of the Scott Strobel and Michael Cappello Research groups and is pursuing a collaborative project analyzing the diversity and bioactivity of Rainforest Endophytes. She participated in a group expedition to Ecuador in March 2008 and has since analyzed the potential of rainforest endophytes as sources of novel antibiotics and anthelmintics. Through her research, she has discovered a novel genus of fungus producing molecules active against drug-resistant strains of *Staphylococcus aureus* and has identified organisms producing molecules active against *Ancylostoma ceylanicum* – a laboratory strain of Hookworm

Disease. Outside of the laboratory, she is an outside-hitter for the Yale Women's Club Volleyball team, the Co-Director and Co-Founder of the Bioethics Society at Yale, and a Freshmen Counselor to the Yale Class of 2013. She has also served as a staff photographer for the Yale Daily News. Before attending Yale, she lived with her parents in Woodbury, Minnesota and graduated from Mounds Park Academy in 2006. While in Minnesota, Blair enjoyed volleyball, track and field, singing in her school choirs, and playing the flute in her high school band.

### **Rebecca Buckwalter-Poza**

Rebecca Buckwalter-Poza is a writer and political consultant with experience in policy research and analysis, communications, and polling. She is a contributor to James Carville's latest book, *40 More Years: How Democrats Will Rule the Next Generation*, and was the Deputy National Press Secretary of the Democratic National Committee during the 2008 election. Previously, Rebecca served as Director of Special Projects at Progressive Accountability, a project of the Center for American Progress and Media Matters, and in the Office of James Carville. She has contributed to progressive political campaigns in the United States, South America, Europe, and Africa. She also led research for Paul Begala's *Third Term: Why George W. Bush ♥ John McCain* and has been published in *The Nation*. Rebecca has served on advisory boards for Campus Progress, the student arm of the Center for American Progress, and Advocates for Youth, a national reproductive rights education and advocacy organization. She is currently involved in the work of Americans for American Progress, a research organization that identifies and counters forms of implicit bias in media and politics. Rebecca is a Harry S. Truman Scholar for Public Service and was named one of "America's Next Top Role Models" by *Glamour*. Now a senior at Harvard College concentrating in Government, Rebecca has been accepted to and plans to attend Yale Law School following her "Luce year." Rebecca's interest in social justice began in Durham, North Carolina, her hometown.

### **Jesse Burk-Rafel**

Jesse Burk-Rafel, a native of Bainbridge Island, WA, will graduate from the University of Washington in March 2010 with a BS in bioengineering. At UW, Jesse has undertaken several independent biomedical research and design projects. He participated in an NIH-sponsored Clinical Research Experience for Engineers program, designing a cancer-targeted magnetic nanoparticle for early detection of tumors. Currently, his research involves developing biosensors for probing host-pathogen interactions, with an emphasis on intestinal diseases afflicting the developing world. Following graduation, Jesse intends to build upon his undergraduate training as a bioengineer to pursue a career as a physician-scientist. Prior to entering an MD/PhD program, he hopes to cultivate an understanding of global healthcare challenges, particularly in the areas of policy, research, therapeutics, and delivery of care. Jesse is interested in Asia's efforts to meet healthcare challenges and improve patient outcomes. Besides his academic pursuits, Jesse is an avid baker and soccer player. He has also worked as a deckhand on a salmon fishing boat in Alaska for two fishing seasons.

## **Henry Cheng**

Henry Cheng recently graduated with a BS in biological engineering with honors from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where he was a Regents Scholar. With funding from a two-year National Institutes of Health undergraduate fellowship, he completed an honors thesis which involved prototyping electrode chips from ordinary compact discs and optimizing DNA detection techniques. He also spent two summers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Massachusetts General Hospital, where he helped to develop devices for ultrasensitive protein detection and virus counting, respectively. Henry is passionate about public policy advocacy. Two successful initiatives he led at the University of Hawaii at Manoa resulted in City Council approval to add the campus to the final route of a proposed mass transit rail system, and Board of Regents and City Council approval for a \$20 per semester/student fee to provide every student with unlimited access to the city bus. He plans to obtain a PhD in Bioengineering, as well as a Master's of Public Health. He believes that portable, rapid, and inexpensive diagnostic devices will be an important component of infectious disease control, and aspires to develop such technologies and make sure they are widely available in the developing regions where they are needed most.

## **Colin Felsman**

Colin Felsman spent most of his youth abroad, living in the Philippines, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and now South Africa. His exposure to the Southern African region gives him a unique perspective on the challenges facing urban areas in developing countries. As a double major in political science and anthropology at Columbia University, he complemented his studies with non-profit work at Africa Action, Mercy Corps and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa. While studying abroad in Buenos Aires, he conducted research on development plans and political mobilization in Villa 31, the city's largest slum. From these experiences, he gained insight into urban poverty as well as the larger challenges of integrating marginalized communities and achieving sustainable economic growth. Over the past eight months, Colin has worked at the Zimbabwe office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), assisting with an integration strategy for populations displaced by political violence, natural disasters and land reform. He is excited by the opportunity to observe and contribute in some small way to the work of a local organization focused on urban poverty and international development in the context of Southeast Asia.

## **Lynsey Gaudio**

Lynsey Gaudio attempted to save a neighborhood forest at the age of nine and has been interested in environmental issues since. A recipient of the Chancellor's Scholarship at Vanderbilt University, she designed her own interdisciplinary major in Environmental Science and Policy, in addition to a second major in Mathematics, allowing her to study a broad range of subjects. Although her early Montessori education and Native American heritage provided the spark for her passion, it was her semester abroad in Australia that inspired her to envision her future in environmental research, policy, and education. The global differences in environmental management and policies she observed prompted her to

accept an internship with South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, where she drafted policy proposals and conducted research related to the environmental impact of marine invasive species, and later at The Climate Project, a non-profit organization that works to educate the public about the harmful effects of climate change. Lynsey is currently working on an independent study on how culture affects environmental initiatives, and expects to graduate with honors in May.

### **Michelle Henry**

Michelle Henry is a fourth year at the University of Virginia, graduating in May with a BS and MA in Environmental Sciences. Throughout her undergraduate experience, she has been committed to community service, both within her local community and abroad. Teaching English and environmental conservation in Chile, Belize, Nicaragua, and Thailand helped shape her desire to pursue a career in sustainable energy. A co-op at PECO Energy in Philadelphia solidified her interest in the energy industry as she had a chance to examine the environmental implications surrounding each type of electricity generation from coal to nuclear. After completing two research projects concerning land use and diet in South Africa, Michelle hopes to continue conducting research abroad in an effort to find technologies that can turn waste into energy through biofuels.

### **Rayden Llano**

Rayden Llano spent much of his childhood in Miami, Florida negotiating his Cuban-American identity. His immigrant parents instilled in him the importance of education and working hard despite never having gone to college themselves. Motivated by his own family struggles with health issues and the desire to advocate on behalf of those unable to do so for themselves, he decided to major in human biology with an emphasis on health policy. Throughout his time at Stanford University, where he attends on a full scholarship, he has been fortunate to work on health policy, both at the national level as an intern at the Office of the Surgeon General and at the international level through health-related internships in France and Spain funded by Stanford and the National Institutes of Health. He believes that every human being has a basic right to full health, and intends to dedicate his life to working towards this goal. When he is not deep in study with his pre-med training, his cognitive psychology research on language, or his other responsibilities, he enjoys dancing and teaching Cuban-style salsa.

### **Paul Kellner**

Paul Kellner currently manages the Care and Protection of Children in Crisis-Affected Countries (CPC) Learning Network, a project of the Program on Forced Migration and Health at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. His previous experience includes working for the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services' International Health and Respiratory Disease Units, Scholastic, Inc.'s Community Affairs and Government

Relations Department, and Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries. He also consulted as a speechwriter and videographer/producer for various mayoral and gubernatorial campaigns. Paul enjoys working with and learning from migrant children and youth, and has done so in various volunteer roles for over a decade. He has an MS in Life Sciences Communication from the University of Wisconsin and a BA in Psychology from the University of Notre Dame.

### **Michael Machala**

Born in the beautiful Magic Valley of central Idaho, Michael Machala grew up beside Rock Creek on the Oregon Trail. He and his older brother enjoyed exploring and fishing there until agricultural run-off made it impossible to eat the fish they caught. In high school, he had a chance to influence pollution of another type as president of the regional anti-tobacco coalition. The coalition lobbied at the local and state levels, helping pass the 2004 Idaho Clean Indoor Air Act. Kenyon College helped inspire Michael's passion for renewable energy technologies, particularly photovoltaics. Before and after graduation, he was able to pursue this passion at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado. Now based in Dresden as a Transatlantic Renewable Energy Fellow, he is absorbing lessons from Germany while continuing his research in low-cost solar cells. Even after frustrations of attending the U.N. Climate Change Summit, he still believes that youth coalitions and appropriate technologies can help move the world toward sustainable, "green" energy economies. Outside work, he loves music (having played violin in the symphony orchestra through college) and competitive swimming (walking-on to Kenyon College's varsity swim team and improving to become a multi-All American and co-Captain of the team that won the NCAA Div III National Championship his senior year).

### **Claire Markgraf**

Claire Markgraf currently works for the World Bank as a junior member of the Chief Economist's staff, assisting in operations and strategy. She most recently served as a member of the World Bank's core team working to expand the input of developing countries in the upcoming G-20 meetings. Prior to joining the Chief Economist's office, she was the portfolio analyst for the World Bank's Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility, where she tracked a portfolio of over 800 infrastructure projects totaling approximately US\$160 million. Claire's field of interest in development includes urban development and planning, as well as development finance and slum redevelopment. Previously, Claire served as a Truman-Albright Fellow in the U.S. Department of the Interior and was primarily responsible for a weekly report for the President of the United States on national lands management issues. Since 2003, Claire has gained significant experience in journalism as editor-in-chief of her college newspaper, executive editor of Ceiling News Magazine, and volunteer editor for Street Sense newspaper. In 2005, Claire was awarded a Truman Scholarship, the U.S.'s highest honor awarded to an undergraduate. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa with high honors from Occidental College in Los Angeles and completed post-bac coursework in economics, statistics, and international policy as a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School.

## **Shira Milikowsky**

Shira Milikowsky is a free-lance theater director who specializes in dark comedies and radical re-imaginings of musicals and classic plays. She also develops original work, bringing together outstanding groups of actors and designers to create collectively devised projects. She received a BA in theater studies from Yale, and an MFA in directing from Columbia. Her MFA thesis project, *The Golem*, was an original play based on the Jewish folktale that she created collaboratively with the company. Her graduate work also included directing Tennessee Williams' little-known avant-garde play, *The Gnädiges Fräulein*, as well as her own deconstruction of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* called *Still Life*. Since Columbia, Shira has directed at the Williamstown Theatre Festival (*Big Money*, written by Kyle Jarrow and Nathan Leigh), The New York International Fringe Festival (*Mourn The Living Hector*, by Paul Cohen, winner of a 2008 Fringe Excellence Award) and extensively at Ars Nova, where she was named the first-ever Director-in-Residence. Shira is a Drama League directing fellow, and the recipient of the Boris Sagal Directing Fellowship, and Manhattan Theatre Club's Jonathan Alper Directing Fellowship. She is currently a resident artist with famed avant-garde company Mabou Mines, where she is developing a new play based on the life and work of Joe Orton. Shira assistant directed the Tony-award winning revival of *Hair*, and will be collaborating with *Hair* director Diane Paulus once again this spring, when she serves as the associate director on the world premiere of *Johnny Baseball* at the American Repertory Theater.

## **Juliana Montgomery**

Juliana Montgomery graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BA in Film Studies from Spelman College in 2006. She has the distinction of being Spelman's first graduate in the independent major she created and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Her interest in media stems from her work with the Oakland, California Film Office, where she served as assistant film coordinator prior to attending Spelman. Her work experience also includes: ABC News, New Line Cinema, the One World Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, and C-SPAN. After graduation from Spelman, Juliana spent 10 months in the Czech Republic as a Fulbright Fellow where she continued her filmmaking studies at FAMU, Prague's renowned film academy. As her Fulbright research project, Juliana produced a documentary in which she examined images of women reflected in Czech visual culture during the pre- and post-communist periods. As a result of her humanitarian and international development interests, Juliana interned with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in post-war Bosnia. In addition, she shot and directed a short documentary on location in Kabul, Afghanistan, which focuses on educational opportunities for Afghan high school students. Juliana's documentary contributed to fundraising efforts for a recently launched foundation called Afghan Scholars Initiative, in which she is a member. Currently, Juliana lives in Portland, Oregon, where she works in production with a creative advertising agency, Wieden+Kennedy. Among the works that she associate produced was the 2009 Emmy award-winning Coca-Cola advertisement, *Heist*.

## **Ouleye Ndoye**

Ouleye Ndoye, a native of upstate New York, graduated with a BA in International Studies from Spelman College in 2007. She was inducted into several honor societies, including Phi Beta Kappa during her junior year. During her undergraduate years, Ouleye developed a strong passion for international human rights while remaining active on campus. Her involvement with an internally displaced persons' camp in Uganda ignited her fervor for taking on challenging global humanitarian issues. As President of the Student Government Association during her senior year, Ouleye designed Spelman's first-ever international Alternative Spring Break program, leading twenty-one college students to Koalack, Senegal to assist in the educational and entrepreneurial endeavors of the "10,000 Girls" project. As founder of the campus newsletter, The Jaguar Print, she worked as editor-in-chief for two years. After graduation, she studied with the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Institute in Cairo, Egypt. As a fellow with the Institute for International Public Policy, she is currently working with African refugees and asylum seekers in Israel. Ouleye has dedicated her life to improving the quality of life for those in the most unfortunate and seemingly hopeless situations.

## **Gillian Quandt**

Gillian Quandt grew up in New York State, studied in California and Costa Rica, and has worked in various Latin American countries. As an undergraduate at Stanford University, she majored in English, with a focus on creative writing, and minored in Spanish. Her interest in Latin America drew her to work in Peru on an archeological dig, teach English at a primary and secondary school in Costa Rica while studying abroad, volunteer in a Mexican orphanage, and help construct eco-tourism campsites in Ecuador to generate revenue for the local community. Gillian deepened her knowledge of the region through a Masters degree in Latin American Studies from Stanford University. Upon graduation, she completed a Fulbright grant in Chile teaching English at la Universidad Católica del Maule and doing a photographic project on vineyard workers in the Maule Valley. Gillian then taught at la Universidad Nacional Andrés Bello in Santiago as a literature and English pedagogy professor before moving to Argentina in 2008. She currently works as the Director of Program Development at la Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia (Civil Association for Equality and Justice), an NGO based in Buenos Aires. When not working, Gillian studies at the national university and collaborates on a research project with a Stanford history professor. She also enjoys practicing photography, spending time with her friends, and running. Gillian plans on beginning law school in the fall of 2011.

## **Julia Simon**

Julia Simon is a radio producer and reporter and an aspiring foreign correspondent. Growing up in Los Angeles, long hours stuck in traffic listening to stories from around the world fueled Julia's love of radio and led to her commitment to a career in broadcast journalism. During the summer of 2008, Julia interned for the NPR News programs "Weekend All Things

Considered” and “Morning Edition”. At NPR, she gained a strong foundation in radio reporting and production, which she carried with her to the Middle East. Julia spent most of 2009 in Egypt on a grant from the Nassef Sawiris Foundation, researching modern renewable energy projects for her University of Chicago senior thesis. While in Egypt, Julia worked for the BBC News Cairo bureau, where she used her media production and Arabic language skills to find and record stories and interviews. At the BBC, Julia helped produce several stories, including stories about Egyptian political succession, a threat to the Muslim call to prayer, and Cairo’s notorious air pollution. She also reported her own story about an Egyptian comedian for PRI’s “The World,” which was broadcast across the US. Julia currently works for the public radio business show “Marketplace” in Los Angeles. In 2009 Julia earned a BA in Middle Eastern Studies with honors from University of Chicago. In addition to Arabic, Julia speaks Spanish and is proficient in French and Swahili. She is an avid practitioner of Ashtanga yoga and loves old Hollywood detective movies.