

# DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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2018-2019 Newsletter

## Undergraduate Alumni News

### **Dennis K. Berman (1996)**

Dennis K. Berman (class of '96) is a Managing Director in Financial Advisory at Lazard, Ltd in New York City, advising companies on media-industry deals and on shareholder activist matters. He was previously the Financial Editor for *The Wall Street Journal* and *Dow Jones Newswires*, responsible for staff and coverage of finance and markets worldwide. Prior to his role as Financial Editor, Berman was Business Editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, where he ran staff and coverage of business around the globe. He also served as a Journal columnist and CNBC contributor. Mr. Berman shares the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for explanatory journalism, and won Gerald Loeb Awards in 2009 and 2016 – business journalism's highest honor. He graduated magna cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania, was a media fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and is a Kentucky Colonel. His Honors History thesis at Penn was titled: "Garden of Knowledge: Education, Cultivation and the Rise of Radio 1922-1934"

### **Leila A. Finucane (1993)**

Leila A. Finucane, (class of '93) is an attorney and the President of Victory Housing, the nonprofit housing development arm of the Archdiocese of Washington. Leila came to Victory Housing after senior manager roles at Capital One in Market Planning and Execution and Community Development Banking. Prior to Capital One, Leila served as a director at NeighborWorks America, where she led National Initiatives and Applied Research, and as the director of the Department of Housing and Community Development for the District of Columbia, where she oversaw the District's affordable housing and community development efforts and the local Housing Regulation Administration. Leila serves on the Housing Development Loan Committee of Volunteers of America National Services and on the boards of the National Housing Trust Community Development Loan Fund and the Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition. She holds a Master of Urban Planning and a JD from New York University. At Penn, Leila majored in American History and African-American Studies.

### **Janine Jjingo (2002)**

Janine Jjingo (class of '02) is a corporate and finance partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP in New York, NY. Ms. Jjingo primarily represents public and private corporations, private equity funds, investment banks, commercial banks and financial institution investors in a wide range of U.S. and cross-border transactions in connection with secured and unsecured financings, acquisition financings, asset-backed loans, restructuring and debtor-in-possession financings and other types of complex and traditional financings. She received her J.D. from Columbia Law School in 2005. At Penn, Ms. Jjingo double majored in Diplomatic History and Political Science. Adam Shear (Ph.D., 2003)

### **Catherine Kearney (2012)**

Catherine Kearney (class of '12) is the Research Coordinator at the Center for Child and Family Traumatic Stress in Baltimore, MD and has been accepted to Georgetown University Law Center for Fall 2019. For the last six years, she has coordinated research projects on the psychosocial, neurological and epigenetic effects of childhood trauma at the University of Maryland, the University of Vermont, and currently at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Johns Hopkins Hospital. After law school, Catherine hopes to advocate for change in the systems that contribute to the traumatic experiences of the children and families she has worked with through these projects. She holds a Masters in Clinical Psychological Science from the University of Maryland. At Penn, Catherine majored in History with a concentration in World History.

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## **Ted Koutsoubas (2012)**

Ted Koutsoubas (Class of '12) is Vice President of Policy and Government Affairs with Viohl & Associates, a Washington, DC consulting firm. Ted advises numerous Fortune 500 companies, trade associations, non-profit organizations, and startups across all fifty states and the federal government, principally on healthcare and technology issues. He helps clients develop and execute multistate advocacy and engagement strategies through the partisan and bipartisan organizations representing elected and appointed officials. He specializes in federal programs administered by state governments, most notably the Medicaid program. Ted is an active member of the Penn Alumni Board of Directors and serves as national chair of the Penn Alumni Council. As a History Major at Penn, he wrote an Honors Thesis and completed a Diplomatic History concentration.

## **Isa Oliveres (2014)**

Isa Oliveres (class of '14) is the Business Manager for the Business Development (a.k.a., Partnerships) team at Dropbox, in San Francisco, CA. Her job is to make sure that the business of the team runs effectively and successfully. In practice, this means that she helps define annual goals and success metrics, drives and supports complex, cross-functional projects, and demonstrates the value the team brings to Dropbox as a whole. Ms. Oliveres double-majored in History and English at Penn. She wrote an Honors Thesis in the History department and describes it as the "highlight of my Penn career."

## **Leora Mincer (2017)**

Leora Mincer (class of '17) concentrated in world history at Penn. After graduating, she channeled her passion for education and cross-cultural conversations into a Nehru-Fulbright fellowship, teaching middle schoolers in Pondicherry, India. She taught a curriculum focused on ESL and American history and culture, and helped her students to produce their own English short films. After returning to the States, Leora canvassed for Congressional candidates in swing districts near her hometown of New York City. She currently works in curriculum development and teacher support at a Hebrew school in Manhattan. In March 2019 she will begin a new position as a Youth Employment Specialist at Jewish Vocational Services in Chicago, where she will work with low-income or disabled youth seeking to build their careers. Leora continues to be an avid student of history: she blogs about works of literature or historical scholarship and is currently working on a documentary about her family's history.

## **Elya Taichman (2014)**

Elya Taichman (class of '14) For the last three and a half years, Elya Taichman served in the office Congresswoman and now Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, most recently as her Legislative Director. Elya's role included managing the Congresswoman's legislative and policy agenda in addition to advising her on health care, financial services, and foreign policy as well as her work on the House Agriculture Committee. Prior to his work in Congress, Elya worked on the legal and compliance team of The Blackstone Group in New York City. Elya graduated from Penn in December 2013 with a degree in Diplomatic History. Elya is planning on starting law school this September and hopes to become a federal prosecutor.