



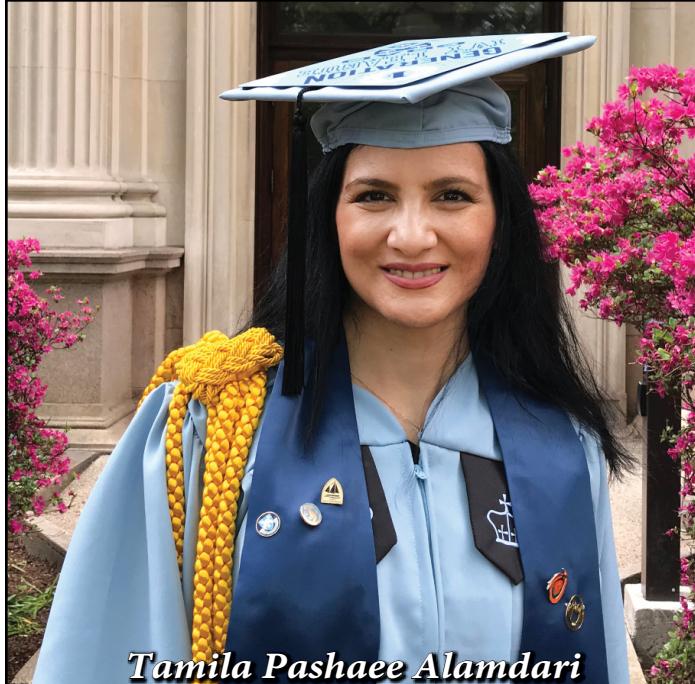
Roger W. Bardwell Scholarships

Friends of the Bardwell Scholarships

Changing Lives One Degree at a Time

Spring 2018
Issue 34

RBS Celebrates its Spring Graduates



Tamila Pashaei Alamdari



April L Graham

Dear RBS Family,

On December 2017, I applied to three graduate schools of education, Harvard, Stanford and Columbia University, to pursue my dream of helping kids who are living in closed societies with limited and censored information in hand. In my personal statement, I wrote about how bewildered I felt in Iran and I talked about that after getting divorced, I literally knew what I didn't want to be, but I had no clue what I want to be. I wrote:

Leaving behind my son and everything I had known, I bought a plane ticket to the U.S. and enrolled at the Harold Washington Community College in Chicago. I sought to regain my dignity by establishing my independence – this would have been an inconceivable project had I remained in Iran. What I lacked, however, was a sense of what I could accomplish. My life had supplied me with no models. Fortunately, at my community college, I acquired a mentor. Hedy Cohen

Tamila continued on page 2...

When I arrived on Mount Holyoke's campus three years ago, I was petrified, nervous, and unsettled. Here I was a 34-year-old Black woman from Chicago with a jumbled road map that led me to this private, white, and elite school in New England that I was certain I did not belong in. I drove up Route 116—the main artery that connects travelers to Mount Holyoke—and I saw the sign that read: Founded 1837 Mount Holyoke College. My first gaze upon the sign that I would eventually see every day for the next three years instantly reinforced that I was home. Somehow, my spirit knew that this was exactly where I was supposed to be at this moment.

Mount Holyoke College became a cocoon for me to blossom into a Black butterfly who would transform into my true self. I have gained confidence, gathered insurmountable knowledge, entered into a sisterhood that extends through time and space, found my academic love of

April continued on page 3...

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was the CEO of the Roger Bardwell Scholarship which helped me to pay my educational expenses. Hedy transformed my outlook on my own potential. She convinced me of the benefit I could render to others through the use of my voice. After two years of hard work, with Hedy's steady guidance, I graduated as the valedictorian, opening the door for me to attend Columbia University in New York.

I ended my personal statement by writing:

Dear (Harvard, Stanford, Columbia University committee) help me to be Mama Hedy for kids in closed countries.

I got into all three of them. On May 14th I graduated with Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Columbia University in New York with honors; Manga Cum Laude, Member of Columbia Honor Society and Columbia University's "Great Grad." I will start my graduate studies in International Education Policy at Stanford Graduate School of Education from September.

I got many awards after leaving the beautiful Harold Washington College, but the RBS scholarship is different. You trusted me at the time I had nothing on my resume to show, but a heart full of dreams and determination to be an independent woman, you grabbed my hand and prevented me from falling down when there were no hands around. I keep telling Mama Hedy that the most important and life changing scholarship that I got was RBS because without that I was not here to continue and to do more for others. I want to thank every single one of you for giving me the opportunity to inspire other people and prove to them that real freedom comes from education and other paths are just a mirage.

Tamila Pashaee Alamdari

AA HWC 2015

BA Columbia University 2018

Bardwell Scholar

Roger W. Bardw



RBS Tamila Pashaee Alamdari



RBS April L. Graham

April continued from page 1...

geography, research, and teaching, and exerted my internal dynamism to become an architect who carved out a purposeful space that was my own. I made it a point to explore all that Mount Holyoke offered while challenging and at times disrupting the rigidness of it as an academic institution with set rules and regulations that simply did not work for me. I extended myself toward every opportunity that Mount Holyoke provided and trusted the process during my travels.

Throughout my time here, I self-designed my own major in Black Geographies—quite possibly becoming the first person in history to do so. I dedicated the past three years to working as a research assistant for the Chair of the Africana Studies department, Dr. Preston Smith, as well as serving as a teaching assistant for his Black Metropolis course, which focuses on post-war Black Chicago. I completed an honors thesis entitled: Still Sweatin': Mapping House and Black Bodies: Place Making In the Black House Music and Cultural Community of Chicago. My thesis work also led me to presenting my research at the Engaged Scholarship and Social Justice Undergraduate Research Conference at Harvard University and the American Association of Geographers Conference in New Orleans as a presenter and panelist. I was elected into the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society and won the Phi Beta Kappa award for my thesis research, served as the president of the Frances Perkins Scholar Association, I was awarded the Barbara Benson '33 Memorial Prize award for prose writing, and two geography senior field work fellowship awards for my research on Black Chicago. I am also a Public Leadership Education Network Student Leadership grant recipient, I was named a Hearst Foundation endowed scholarship recipient for the past two years, and traveled to Washington D.C. and New York City for the first time. Lastly, I just received the news as I write this testimony that I will graduate summa cum laude. Three years ago, these were goals that I could not foresee for myself as a four-time community college dropout, but here I was living, breathing, existing, maneuvering, and accomplishing these goals. Mount Holyoke was the only place to make these dreams firm realities.

The cross pollination and collaborative efforts of Hedy, the Roger W. Bardwell Scholarship family, and Mount Holyoke provided vast opportunities and a space where I could locate myself in academia as a Black female scholar. I am honored, beholden, and thrilled to walk across the stage on my mother's birthday on May 20, earning my degree after twenty years of multiple disruptions, adversities, and uncertainties. I am a living, breathing, flesh and blood example of the power of education, investment, mentorship, patience, hard work, and determination. I lost both my beloved 16-year-old beagle the first week of my senior year and my grandfather, who I deeply cherished, five months later. Despite this, I persisted because I knew that it is what both would have wanted, but more than anything, I knew my purpose.

One of the things that I find most compelling about geography is the ways our geographic imaginaries of places create boundaries that determine who belongs as well as who does not. For a while, I felt out of place at the thought of Mount Holyoke only to discover that it was in fact my place—my "Mo Home"—all along. That is why my spirit jolted and my eyes collected tears as I drove up Route 116 that humid, still day in June. My internal compass directed me to my intended home and Mount Holyoke has paid it forward by assisting me in developing my agency as a cartographer who is creating my next map. My heart and soul are full as I embark on the next chapter as a proud Black Chicagoan with a map in hand in search of the next Route 116.

*April L. Graham
AA HWC 2015
BA Mount Holyoke College 2018
Bardwell Scholar*



Bardwell Lunch

The 16th annual RBS luncheon welcomed over 50 supporters and over 20 scholars. On April 6th, 2018 we gathered to reflect on and celebrate the impact that the Roger Bardwell Scholarships (RBS) and mentorship from its director, Hedy Cohen, provide to those much in need. Among the scholars, we had the pleasure of hearing from Edilberto «Tito» Vasquez, notable for now having a successful career in social work and working with veterans in Evanston to ensure they obtain the benefits they deserve. We also received the news from Johnny Phan that he is now recognized as a top seller at his real estate firm. Tamila Pashaei Alamdari, former Harold Washington College valedictorian and now a soon-to-be graduate from Columbia University, was also present among many other memorable and prosperous RBS scholars. Their message was loud and clear: “your support matters and I am the result.” A PowerPoint presentation looped throughout the luncheon - providing additional success stories of the many scholars that Hedy and RBS has helped to uplift. Among older RBS scholars, we also had the pleasure of meeting new ones, such as Jacky Sanchez, or the twins Rubi and Esmeralda Amaro. Although some may not have a fully developed career path in mind, they are certain that school is also for that, to discover one’s array of options.

Harold Washington College provided great musical accompaniment from its Jazz band with some very mellifluous tones from its emerging talent. Although we enjoyed a deliciously catholic array of food, the desserts by Bonnie Dohonge and Susan Sidell were especially noteworthy. After reconnecting with scholars and supporters, RBS board member, Alba Orizaba, carried out a raffle, and provided a special thank you to Ellen Goldberg for serving as a crucial link between RBS scholars and four-year institutions. Thanks to Ellen’s support, RBS scholars have successfully navigated the transfer process, often achieving placement in top academic programs. Shelley Sutherland, a long-time supporter of RBS, graciously delivered a cogent and true portrait of Hedy’s passion for (international) service and

called on those in the room to make a contribution for this cause – educational attainment for those with tremendous potential, but who face difficult circumstances. Thanks to the continued support of Hedy and RBS donors, the organization continues to thrive.

Yunuen Rodriguez

AA HWC 2009

BA Beloit College 2011

Current MA student at University of Chicago

Bardwell Scholar



Music provided by HWC Jazz Pop Ensemble including: Jessica Barber, Dilan Caicedo, Adam Duckworth, Seamus Fisler, Kaylen Foster, Diego Serna & Kiki Xu



RBS Tamila Pashaei Alamdari & Hedy Cohen

vean, Spring 2018



RBS Tamila Pashaei, Hedy Cohen, RBS Board Member Alba Orizaba, RBS Hailey Stout



Hedy Cohen & RBS Board Member Alba Orizaba

2018 Bardwell Scholars

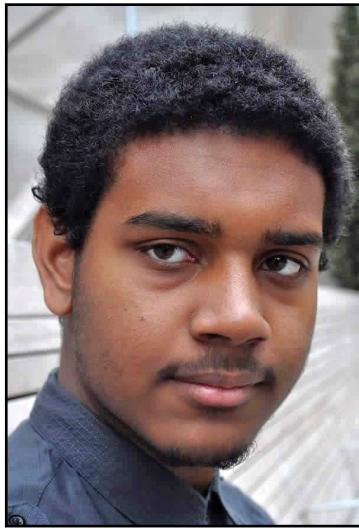


Back row: J. Phan, P Burgess, D. Richardson, V. Figueroa, T. Smith, R. Jones, A. Allakim
Middle: H. Cohen, M. Amaro, H. Stout, T. Pashaei, A. Wilbon, O. Stinga, HW President, I. Lopez
Front: Alba Orizaba, T. Girten, A. Robinson, H. Yakibu

A Well-Rounded Education

I decided to start at Harold Washington College for the Fall semester of 2015, because I wanted an education that was more well-rounded and wasn't just about engineering. During my time here at Harold Washington College, I learned so much from the different courses that

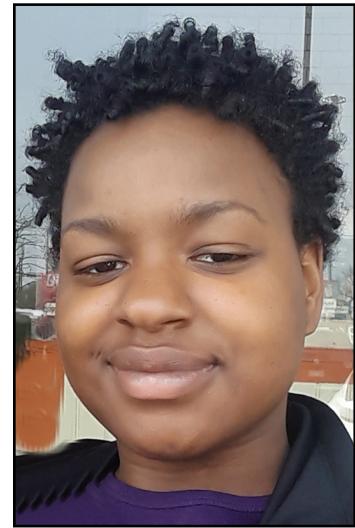
I took, and I feel that it has made a positive impact on my life. But, as I was nearing the end of my second year, I hadn't been accepted into any other colleges and I wanted to continue my education here. The Bardwell Scholarship came in during my last semester when financial aid would no longer cover me and it allowed me to finish my Associate's in Science. I am proud to be a Bardwell alum, and as a result I have all the classes I need to finish my Bachelor's degree in Engineering.



*Victor Figueroa
AA HWC 2018
Bardwell Scholar*

Very Important Skills

My goal last year was to finish my associate's; now it has been completed and it is one of my proudest moments. During my stay at Harold Washington College I gained a few very important skills. The most important was confidence in myself, that would help me surpass any obstacle. I plan on going back to school to get a Bachelor's degree in Film and Animation. I am thankful for the small team that I have: my sister, and my grandmother who gave me a place to stay when I had nowhere to go. I am grateful to Rachel, Hedy and some professors for the advice and support that I have received.



*Ayme Robinson
AA HWC 2018
Bardwell Scholar*

Thank You

I know it's been a long time since we last spoke, but I want to share with you that I did finally complete my academic journey with IIT. Although I had many life altering experiences and the fact that it almost took me 10 years to complete, I graduated on May 12, 2018 with a bachelor's degree.

Thank you for believing in me during my time at HWC. I never forgot.

*Chriselda Bell
AA HWC 2009
BA IIT 2018
Bardwell Scholar*



A Change to Grow

October 23rd, 2011, my life changed. At the time I couldn't determine if it was a change for better or a change that would leave me mentally destroyed for the rest of my life. At 15 years-old I endured the tragic and very sudden death of my mom. Losing my best friend was and continues to be the most confusing and heartbreakin time in my life.



Upon graduating high school, and being the first in my family to attend college, I was also the first to move out of state to attend college. Therefore, I didn't have the guidance I needed in regards to the finances that came

along with paying for college. Thus, in 2014, I aimlessly chose to attend Columbia College Chicago, a school that cost more than my loans and financial aid could afford. During my time at Columbia College, I also encountered a bill of \$10,000 that I wasn't able to pay before the start of the next semester. However, that barrier couldn't stop me!

In 2015, the next semester, I enrolled into Harold Washington College. During my two and a half years there I met some of the most thoughtful and genuine faculty and staff. My work study supervisors, Joyce McManus and Jerusha McLaughlin, and my advisor Anna Koomalsingh have had the largest impact in my career at Harold Washington College. There were days when Jerusha would "strongly advise" me to go to every career/job fair and remind me that, "work study isn't forever; I want you to have a REAL job because one day you'll be in the REAL world, Yanni." They believed in me, and most importantly, taught me how to believe in myself.

My first accomplishment at HWC, was for the first time ever, I made the honors list two consecutive semesters and graduated with an honors

diploma. Also, becoming a Bardwell Scholar and meeting Hedy was one of the most eye-opening experiences ever. Hedy is and continues to be such a positive, and motivating force in my life. During my first few years in college, I decided that I had no choice but to finish college, because I needed to be that example, and in the future, help other students like me who felt that finishing college was impossible, and Becoming a Bardwell Scholar has assisted me with achieving that goal. In addition to tutoring 3rd and 4th graders after school, I also teach my students about financial literacy. I believe that being exposed to finances early will help guide students with making better financial choices in the future, because, like myself, some students may not have the guidance from their parents or family members about the financial aspect of a higher education.

While maintaining 2-3 jobs each semester, I also achieved my goal of completely paying my bill at Columbia College! I couldn't believe I was capable of having a goal that felt impossible, and conquering it; and it was all because of the amazing family I had at Harold Washington College rooting behind me. Currently, I attend the University of Illinois at Chicago in the College of Business Administration with a focus in Marketing and Graphic Design. Now, as an adult, I figured out that my mom passing wasn't a change for better or worse, but merely a change for me to grow and develop into the beautiful woman I am today.

*Ayahna Wilbon
AA HWC 2018
Bardwell Scholar*

Visit us on the web at
www.rogerbardwellscholarship.org

SAVE the DATE!!!

3rd Annual RBS Nights Out

Friday, August 24, 2018

Bookends and Beginnings, Evanston

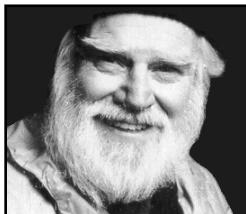
Food, Music, Books, Fun

Mark your calendars now!!! More Details to Come!!!

Contributions, which are deductible to the extent the law allows, are always appreciated and enable us to continue this important work. Please ask your employer if they offer matching funds or corporate contributions to nonprofit organizations.

(The Roger W. Bardwell Scholarship Fund is a registered 501(C)3 tax exempt organization)

Contributions to the Roger W. Bardwell Scholarship Fund may be made by check and sent to:



Bardwell Scholarship NFP

1326 Monroe

Evanston, IL 60202

or

donate on our website through Pay Pal



CITY COLLEGES of CHICAGO

Harold Washington

For further information, or if you know someone who might be a candidate for a Bardwell Scholarship, please contact Hedy Cohen:

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