

ALUMNI WEEKEND OVERVIEW
Friday, April 17 and Saturday, April 18

FRIDAY, APRIL 17

4:00-5:00 PM
Lecture Hall

Hearst Lecture | The Two Revolutions in the Newsroom: Mobile Storytelling and Artificial Intelligence

With two revolutions running parallel in newsrooms across the planet, journalists who are not usually the first to get on board the train of change have to deal with crafting stories for consumption on mobile devices, while learning about artificial intelligence and its potential adoption to help with content creation. Those two revolutions are the subject of Dr. Garcia's talk. He will present tips for how editors in newsrooms worldwide can navigate these two concurrent revolutions: mobile-first and artificial intelligence. Unlike previous changes the media has encountered, these transformations fundamentally affect the craft of journalism itself — specifically, how content is created and experienced.

Ultimately, these revolutions — mobile-first and AI — will redefine journalism at its core, empowering journalists to craft stories that are both technologically advanced and unmistakably human. Journalists will find themselves amid two revolutions that directly affect the craft of journalism. Dr. Garcia will also go in-depth about artificial intelligence and its transformative impact on content creation, drawing from his book, *AI: The Next Revolution in Content Creation*, with emphasis on prompt engineering—a critical skill for today's creative professionals. Dr. Garcia will discuss his concept of the 'scent of the human' and will share findings from his ongoing research into human creativity in the age of AI.

Mario R. García, Ph.D.
CEO and Founder, García Media and
Senior Adviser on News Design and Adjunct Professor, Columbia Journalism School
Dr. Mario R. García is Senior Adviser on News Design and Adjunct Professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, and the CEO and Founder of García Media, a global consulting firm specializing in newsroom transformation, design strategy, and mobile-first storytelling.

Recognized worldwide as one of the premier media designers, Dr. García has led more than 750+ redesign and innovation projects across 122 countries. His clients include *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *South China Morning Post*, *Aftenposten*,

Handelsblatt, and many other major news organizations. Beyond journalism, his corporate work spans collaborations with Facebook, Walmart, the United Nations, Hapag Lloyd, and JetBlue Airways. His current projects include Handelsblatt and Tagesspiegel (Germany), and training workshops for a number of media outlets, including The Times of London and the Singapore Straits Times, and South Africa's Media 24 Group.

Dr. García joined Columbia in 2013 as the Hearst Digital Media Professor in Residence, guiding journalists worldwide on how to tell stories effectively on mobile platforms and emerging digital channels. He also founded the Graphics & Design Program at the Poynter Institute, has served on its Foundation Board, and has been deeply involved in Poynter's landmark EyeTrack Research series.

The author of 17 books, Dr. García's influential titles include the acclaimed trilogy *The Story: Transformation · Storytelling · Design*, *AI: The Next Revolution in Content Creation*, and his newest release, *Consulting with Heart* (2025) — a reflection on creativity, empathy, and leadership in the age of artificial intelligence.

His lifetime achievements have been recognized with the Society for News Design's Lifetime Achievement Award, the University of Missouri Medal of Honor in Journalism, and inclusion among *People Magazine*'s "100 Most Influential Hispanics."

5:00-6:00 PM **Hearst Reception**
World Room

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

8:00-9:00 AM **Breakfast**
Stabile Center
Begin the day with breakfast in the Stabile Student Center before kicking off the full slate of the day's programming.

9:15-10:15 AM **State of the J-School featuring Dean Cobb**
Lecture Hall
Join Dean Cobb for an engaging overview of the Journalism School's recent achievements, current priorities, and vision for the years ahead. This annual update offers alumni an inside look at new initiatives, evolving industry partnerships, and the ways the school continues to prepare journalists for a rapidly changing media landscape. It's a chance to hear directly from the dean and reconnect with the mission that drives our community forward.

Jelani Cobb, Ph.D.
Dean and Henry R. Luce Professor of Journalism, Columbia Journalism School
Jelani Cobb joined the Journalism School faculty in 2016 and became Dean in 2022. He has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 2015. He received a Peabody Award for his 2020 PBS Frontline film *Whose Vote Counts?* and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Commentary in 2018. He has also been a political analyst for MSNBC since 2019.

In the fall of 2025, Dr. Cobb released his latest book, *Three or More is a Riot: Notes on How We Got Here: 2012–2025*. The book is a collection of his essays from the last decade, chronicling the rise of social movements and the subsequent political backlash that has shaped modern America. He is also the author of *The Substance*

of Hope: Barack Obama and the Paradox of Progress and *To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic*. He is the editor or co-editor of several volumes, including *The Matter of Black Lives*, a collection of *The New Yorker*'s writings on race, and *The Essential Kerner Commission Report*. He is a producer or co-producer on several documentaries, including *Lincoln's Dilemma, Obama: A More Perfect Union*, and *Policing the Police*.

Dr. Cobb was educated at Jamaica High School in Queens, NY, Howard University, where he earned a BA in English, and Rutgers University, where he completed his MA and doctorate in American History in 2003. He is also a recipient of fellowships from the Ford Foundation, the Fulbright Foundation, and the Shorenstein Center at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

10:30-11:30 AM
Lecture Hall

CJSAA Spring Lecture | How Covering Politics Has Changed and Its Effects on Journalists Around the World

This lecture examines the rapid transformation of political reporting in an era defined by digital media, shifting public trust, and rising threats to press freedom. Drawing on global examples, it explores how these changes have reshaped the day-to-day realities of journalists—from new reporting challenges to the personal and professional risks they face—offering insight into what the future of political journalism may hold.

Catherine V. Herridge '90
Emmy Award-winning Veteran Investigative Correspondent
Catherine V. Herridge is an Emmy Award–winning investigative correspondent specializing in national security and intelligence. In 2024, she was held in civil contempt for protecting confidential sources tied to her 2017 reporting; her First Amendment case is now before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, with implications for journalists nationwide.

Herridge previously served as a senior investigative correspondent for CBS News (2019–2024), where her work helped drive major legislative reforms, including the Camp Lejeune Justice Act. Her reporting also earned the Society of Environmental Journalists' Kevin Carmody Award for uncovering toxic hazards at the K-2 military base. She played a key role in elevating the case of retired Col. Paris Davis, who received the Medal of Honor in 2023 after decades of delays.

A veteran foreign correspondent, Herridge has reported from conflict zones including Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Russia, and the former Yugoslavia. She previously served as chief intelligence correspondent for FOX News and as a correspondent for ABC News in London.

Now an independent journalist, she recently partnered with the Los Angeles Times Media Group on a weekly show, "Straight to the Point with Catherine Herridge," which draws over 1.5 million weekly views on X and YouTube. She is a graduate of Harvard College and Columbia Journalism School, where she founded a national security reporting scholarship.

12:00-2:00 PM
Italian Academy

Alumni Awards Luncheon

The Columbia Journalism School Alumni Awards Ceremony will recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements of alumni with distinguished careers in journalism, notable contributions to journalism education, or achievements in related fields.

This event promises to be an inspiring experience, fostering connections across generations and rekindling the spirit of our shared commitment to truth and information. Honorees include:

Alumni Award Honorees
Beata Balogová '07, Chief Commentator, *SME*
Joe Rodriguez '81, Retired Editorial Writer and Columnist, *San Jose Mercury News*
Rex Smith '80, Publisher, *The Upstate American*, and Retired Editor-in-Chief, *The Albany Times Union*

First Decade Alumni Award Honoree
Abdi Latif Dahir '16, Middle East Correspondent, *The New York Times*

1:45-2:15 PM
Pulitzer Hall Steps

Class Photos under "The First Amendment Lives Here"

Classes will be scheduled by appointment for their class photos

2:00-3:00 PM
Room 601B

Screening | DocFest Screening Room

Bindings

Directed by Susan Pinchiaroli '25 and Lucy Spahr '25
The Scranton family wrestles with an uncertain future for their adult son, Christian, who has autism, turning to their small craft business as a catalyst for his independence.

Revival

Directed by Claudia Rosel '25 and Nicola Sitch '25
After a terminal diagnosis, Chris, a solitary New Yorker, joins a senior dance troupe, finding meaning and community while preparing for a final performance.

Spotlight

Directed by Almar Ahad '25 and Ken Wu '25
In a small New Jersey dance studio, 15-year-old Hanui Jeong is training for the largest multi-label K-pop audition and competition in North America. She began dancing three years ago, after being adopted by her aunt, Mee Jung, former professional dancer and K-pop dance instructor. In the studio, Hanui's aunt pushes her to be her best, offering tough love along the way. While Hanui's talents shine, she struggles to fit into the competitive world of K-pop, an industry where perfection is required but impossible to achieve. A new student, 15-year-old Jacob Comia from Staten Island, joins the studio just months before the competition. His looks and charm earn instant praise, but charm alone may not be enough to make it to the top. As the students prepare for the big stage, Hanui must decide if her love of dance can withstand the unrelenting pressure and impossible standards of the K-pop industry.

The Final Bow

Directed by Luisa Barone ’25 and Iona Horton ’25

Following a master bowmaker, a celebrated cellist, and Brazilian conservationists, the three unite over pernambuco - a rare tree found only in Brazil’s Atlantic Forest and essential to the world’s finest stringed instrument bows. As the government moves to upgrade the species to the highest level of international protection, conservationists fight illegal logging, and musicians fear losing the tool that connects their souls to their music.

2:00-3:45 PM
Stabile Center

Book Expo

Celebrate the written work of our community at this showcase featuring new releases from alumni and faculty published over the past year. From groundbreaking investigations to innovative storytelling and timely nonfiction, the expo highlights the breadth and impact of our authors’ contributions. Attendees will have the chance to explore recent titles, meet the writers, and discover the ideas shaping today’s conversations.

3:00-4:00 PM
Lecture Hall

Panel | Once A Journalist, Always a Journalist: Alternative Careers

This panel brings together alumni who have successfully pursued or pivoted to careers outside traditional newsrooms while continuing to draw on the core skills of journalism—research, storytelling, critical thinking, and public engagement. Hear how they’ve translated their training into dynamic roles across diverse industries and what their journeys can teach current and future journalists about the wide range of career possibilities.

Moderator
Liz Borod Wright ’00
Communications Director, Richard Attias & Associates

Panelists include
Bianca Consunji ’12
Director of AI Enablement and Adoption, NBC Universal

Renée Edelman ’80
Senior Vice President, Edelman Public Relations Worldwide

Tony Lin ’17
GenAI Content Engineer, Multilingual & Multimodal, Meta

Liz Borod Wright ’00
Communications Director, Richard Attias & Associates
Liz Borod Wright is a strategic communications leader, content creator, and social media expert with a background spanning journalism, digital strategy, and international affairs. She currently serves as Communications Director at Richard Attias & Associates (RA&A), where she leads integrated communications strategies including branding, paid and earned media, crisis communications, and digital campaigns for high-profile global summits. Her

work includes supporting the Future Investment Initiative (FII) conferences in Riyadh and FII PRIORITY summits in Rio de Janeiro and Hong Kong, providing her with a strong global perspective and experience engaging diverse audiences.

Previously, Liz held senior social and editorial roles at BBC Travel, NBC 4 New York, and ABCNews.com, where she drove significant audience growth and digital engagement. Earlier in her career, she reported for FORTUNE.com and held editorial roles at Good Housekeeping, Folio, and Zagat. Liz has also taught at Columbia Journalism School and NYU and holds a BA in Communication from Cornell University and an MS in Journalism from Columbia Journalism School.

Bianca Consunji ’12
Director of AI Enablement and Adoption, NBC Universal
Bianca Consunji is the Director of AI Enablement and Adoption at NBC Universal. She was previously a GenAI Content Engineer at Meta and before that, led the Standards, Practices and Insights teams at Netflix, where she helped develop quality standards and integrate AI into product workflows. Before transitioning to tech, Consunji was a documentary journalist managing video teams for NBC News, Vice, BuzzFeed, and other digital media publications.

Born and raised in Manila, Philippines, Consunji graduated from Columbia Journalism School in 2012 and has since made New York her home. Her work spans diverse aspects of technology and society, from reporting on cobalt and coltan mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo to shaping tech-driven content strategies across global teams.

Renée S. Edelman ’80
Senior Vice President, Edelman
Renée S. Edelman is senior vice president, archivist, and alumni relations leader at Edelman. She formerly served for 25 years as a senior media strategist in Edelman’s Technology practice. Edelman worked on corporate reputation with both emerging and multinational companies in cybersecurity, e-commerce, enterprise software, and new media, including Palo Alto Networks, eBay, UPS, Adobe, Oracle, Fujitsu America, The New Yorker’s Cartoon Bank, Time Inc. New Media, and CNNfn.com. In 1998, she helped found PR21, which, since 2004, has operated as Zeno Group, Daniel J. Edelman Holdings’ second communications brand.

Before joining Edelman, she worked for five years as a journalist at the *New York Daily News*, *The Central Jersey Home News*, and *Women’s Wear Daily*. Edelman earned a B.A. in English from Yale University. She graduated with an M.S. in Journalism from Columbia Journalism School. She is passionate about recruiting young people to Edelman. She serves on the board of directors of the Pulitzer Prize-winning off-off-Broadway Theatre for the New City. Edelman is an active member of the Women’s Leadership Circle of Phillips Exeter Academy and is a *Marquis Who’s Who* honoree.

Tony Lin ’17

GenAI Content Engineer, Multilingual & Multimodal, Meta

Tony Lin 林東尼 ’17 is a bilingual producer and media entrepreneur working at the intersection of AI, language, and global media. He is currently a Content Engineer at Meta Superintelligence Labs, leading content internationalization efforts for AI models and products. Before Meta, Tony led synopsis writing for Netflix's APAC region and was a founding writer for Netflix Golden, shaping the platform’s editorial voice for the global Asian diaspora.

Before entering tech, Tony built an award-winning career in newsrooms, including BuzzFeed News, Bloomberg, and VICE News Tonight. He co-created Quartz’s Webby-winning series *Because China* and won a Peabody Award for VICE’s docuseries *Transnational*, which documented trans lives and global struggles. Currently, Tony hosts the bilingual podcast 行星酒馆 Planet Speakeasy, a space where he explores diaspora identity and the nuances of living across different worlds.

4:00-5:00 PM
Lecture Hall

Ida B. Wells Lecture | The Changing Landscape of Newspaper Ownership and Its Impact on Local News

This year’s Ida B. Wells Lecture examines how shifts in newspaper ownership— from consolidation to private equity to emerging nonprofit models—are reshaping the quality, reach, and accountability of local journalism. The talk explores what these changes mean for communities that rely on local news and highlights the challenges and opportunities facing reporters, readers, and newsrooms in this evolving ecosystem.

Dr. Frances Murphy Draper

CEO and Publisher, The AFRO-American Newspaper

Frances Murphy Draper (Toni) is CEO and Publisher of The AFRO-American Newspapers, the nation’s longest-running Black-owned family newspaper, founded by her great-grandfather in 1892. A fourth-generation publisher, she is leading the AFRO’s digital transformation while advancing its 134-year legacy of truth-telling and community impact.

An award-winning media executive recognized by the Local Media Association and the National Newspaper Publishers Association, she bridges journalism, ministry, and nonprofit governance. She serves on the board of Associated Black Charities and on advisory committees at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

A proud graduate of Morgan State University, she holds several advanced degrees. In 2024, she received the Maryland Senate’s First Citizen Award, and in 2025, Johns Hopkins University awarded her an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

Dr. Draper is an author with Our Daily Bread Ministries and a national advocate for independent press freedom and the enduring power of the Black press.

5:00-6:30 PM	**Receptions**
Dean's Suite, 7th Fl	**50th Reunion: Class of 1976**
World Room	**25th Reunion: Class of 2001**
World Room	**JTEN Reunion: Classes 2016-2026**

6:30 PM **2026 Columbia Journalism School Alumni Weekend Concludes**