FIFTY-THIRD COMMENCEMENT

JUNE 2, 2017

DAVID GEFFEN HALL AT LINCOLN CENTER

NEW YORK CITY
ORDER OF EXERCISES

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
Joy Connolly
Provost and Senior Vice President, The Graduate Center

PRELUDE
The Graduate Center Brass Quintet

PROCISIONAL
Die Bänkelsängerlieder

CO-GRAND MARSHALS
Professor Stephen Brier and Professor Jean Graham-Jones

MARSHALS FOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS/FACULTY
Professor Gerald Creed and Assistant Professor Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis

MARSHALS FOR STUDENTS
Professor Laurel Eckhardt and Associate Professor Duncan Faherty

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
Professor Nadine Carey

GREETINGS
Robert F. Mujica
Board of Trustees, The City University of New York

Marc Shaw
Senior Advisor to the Chancellor for Fiscal Policy
The City University of New York

ON BEHALF OF THE GRADUATES
Seçil Yılmaz
Ph.D. Program in History
PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENT'S DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI MEDAL

Chase F. Robinson
President, The Graduate Center

President's Distinguished Alumni Medal Awarded to
LuAnn Walther, Ph.D.
English, 1978

PRESENTATION OF HONORARY DEGREE CANDIDATES

President Chase F. Robinson

Honorary Degrees Awarded to
Vanita Gupta, Doctor of Humane Letters
Presented by Professor Don Robotham

Wael Shawky, Doctor of Humane Letters
Presented by Professor Katherine Manthorne

Lord Nicholas Stern, Doctor of Humane Letters
Presented by Professor Janet Gornick

ADDRESS

Jesse Prinz
Distinguished Professor of Philosophy

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CONFERRING OF DEGREES

President Chase F. Robinson

HOODING OF THE CANDIDATES

Professor Peter Eckersall

CLOSING REMARKS

President Chase F. Robinson

RECESSIONAL

Canzona Bergamasca
LUANN WALThER

As an editor and publisher of hundreds of works by many of the world’s most celebrated writers and literary critics, you have shown remarkable vision and discernment. Because of you, emerging writers have become household names, and classic works by established writers have reached new audiences. Your devotion to publishing has made it possible for millions of readers to experience the joys of literature.


You have said that success as a publisher involves identifying and acquiring “the best writers and the best books.” Repeatedly, you have proven your expertise in doing exactly that.

Among your many triumphs are new works by acclaimed writers, such as the novelists Ha Jin and Ali Smith. You have published renowned American playwrights, including John Guare, Pulitzer Prize–winners Sam Shepard and David Mamet, and Anna Deavere Smith, who received the National Humanities Medal from President Barack Obama.

You have also spotlighted your alma mater, publishing leading literary critics Alfred Kazin, who was a Distinguished Professor at the Graduate Center, and Irving Howe, a friend of the Graduate Center and one of your mentors.

In your words, you have had “the honor of working with many wonderful authors, including Margaret Atwood, Toni Morrison, Alice Munro, Oliver Sacks, Chinua Achebe, Colson Whitehead, Patti Smith, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Henry Louis Gates” at Vintage/Anchor. At Everyman’s Library you have overseen the U.S. publication of 650 hardcover classics. You were also responsible for the PEN Award–winning translation of War and Peace, which became a national bestseller.

For your extraordinary work in elevating the written word and extending its reach to generations of diverse readers, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York is proud to present you with the President’s Distinguished Alumni Medal.

JUNE 2, 2017
VANITA GUPTA

Few have worked so forcefully or effectively for social justice. Born in Philadelphia to immigrant parents, you began your legal career at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, where you helped successfully overturn the wrongful drug convictions of 38 individuals in Tulia, Texas. Later, as a staff attorney with the ACLU’s Racial Justice Program, you won a landmark settlement on behalf of immigrant children. That same ruling spurred the Department of Homeland Security to begin reforming the nation’s immigration detention system.

You went on to become the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General and head of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, which you joined in 2014 — just nine weeks after Michael Brown was killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. For the next two years, you met with mayors, police chiefs, and citizens nationwide, part of a daunting effort to mend frayed relations between police departments and their communities. Ultimately, you achieved the seemingly impossible in this era of political polarization: finding common ground on criminal justice reform among liberal and conservative activists alike, and law enforcement leaders too.

You have also prosecuted hate crimes and human trafficking, promoted disability rights, protected the rights of LGBT individuals, and fought discrimination in education, employment, housing, lending, and voting. In January, when a new administration meant stepping down from your role at the Justice Department, you underscored to your staff the gravity of their work. According to a New Yorker feature story, you said, “Even when it’s hard, I need every single one of you to keep pushing, because there are too many people in this country who are depending on us.”

For your selflessness, your fierce determination, and your pursuit of justice for our nation’s most vulnerable, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York is proud to confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa.
WAEL SHAWKY

As one of the most celebrated artists from the Middle East, you have won acclaim for retelling history from a perspective seldom seen in the West. You are perhaps best known for *Cabaret Crusades*, your epic trilogy of films — featuring puppets and marionettes — that presents the history of the Crusades through an Arab lens. In 2015, the films were screened at MoMA PS1 as part of your first solo exhibition at a major U.S. museum. *The New Yorker* praised the "compelling oddity" of your approach to this charged history and the "onion-like layers of [your] reappropriation." Writing for *New York* magazine, art critic Jerry Saltz called it "one of the best exhibitions of the year."

Throughout your projects are lingering questions of truth, history, and myth. You juxtapose modernity and historical tradition to often startling effect — whether instructing Bedouin children to simulate the construction of an airport runway in the desert, or staging a heavy metal concert in a remote Egyptian village. For your use of film, performance, and narrative, you have won the Ernst Schering Foundation Art Award, the Abraaj Capital Art Prize, and the first Mario Merz Prize. Among the institutions displaying your work are the Tate Collection in London, the National Gallery of Canada, the Mathaf Museum in Doha, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, among many others. In 2012, yours was considered one of the most important presentations at dOCUMENTA (13), the highly influential art exhibition.

You were born in Alexandria, Egypt, and earned your B.F.A. in Fine Arts from Alexandria University, then went on to receive an M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Fine Arts. You are now back in your home city, where you founded MASS Alexandria, a space that provides opportunities for independent study and learning for Egyptian artists.

For your dazzling creativity, your boldness of vision, and your support of emerging voices in the arts, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York is proud to confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.

JUNE 2, 2017
“There is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, if we take strong action now.”

Less an introduction than an opening salvo, these stark words lead what is now known as the “Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change,” your 700-page report that exposed environmental impacts and monetary costs. Published just over a decade ago, it made a powerful case for the benefits of confronting climate change. Today, it stands as one of the most influential and widely known works to address this global threat.

Your research has earned you many of the academy’s highest honors. In 2013, you were named President of the British Academy, and in 2014, a Fellow of the Royal Society. The American Philosophical Society elected you as a member, as did the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. You have shared your knowledge with students all over the world, through appointments at the University of Oxford, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, École Polytechnique, the Indian Statistical Institute, and the People’s University of China, among other institutions. Today you serve as Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, an institute you have led since its founding in 2008 at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Your accomplishments in other sectors are no less remarkable. From 2000 to 2003, you served as Chief Economist and Senior Vice President at the World Bank. Following that appointment, you were named the Second Permanent Secretary to Her Majesty’s Treasury, the Director of Policy and Research for the Prime Minister’s Commission for Africa, and the Head of the Government Economic Service. You have been knighted for your work in economics, and named a cross-bench life peer as Baron Stern of Brentford. Your focus throughout can be summarized by the title of your most recent book: Why Are We Waiting? The Logic, Urgency, and Promise of Tackling Climate Change.

When a revolutionary change in thinking is needed most, you inform, incite, and inspire. The Graduate Center of the City University of New York is proud to confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa.

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SEPTEMBER 2016

MARISSA NICOLE KINSEY  
JUNE 2017
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Michael David Kirby</td>
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<td>Amy S. Kraizman</td>
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<td>Maple Wu</td>
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<td>Linguistics</td>
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<td>Khanin Chaiphet</td>
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