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(310) 546-5252

JULY/AUGUST 2024

Upcoming Events

OC Coffee & Networking

SAT, SEP 7 @ 10:00AM

Stereoscope Coffee (Newport Beach)

No charge, cash coffee bar

Recent Grads Event: Welcome To Your City LA 2024

WED, SEP 11 @ 6:00PM

Mama Shelter Hotel's Rooftop (Los Angeles)

No charge

Day Trip to Catalina Island

SAT, SEP 14 @ 7:15AM

Catalina Island (depart from Long Beach)

\$85, members; \$95, nonmembers

A Conversation with Harvard President Garber

MON, SEP 16 @ 6:30PM

Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles (Beverly Hills)

\$25, Alumni, guests, and members of the Harvard community



Assemblyman Rick Chavez Zbur JD '83 Accepts the John Harvard Award for Distinguished Community Service

Harvard Club Annual Dinner Brings a Capacity Crowd

The Harvard Club of Southern California's Annual Dinner on Sunday, June 23 was one of the Club's most successful, with a sell-out crowd gathering at the

Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens.

The Club bestowed the **John Harvard Award for Distinguished Community Service on Rick Chavez Zbur JD '83**, California State Assemblyman serving the 51st District (representing 500,000 Angelenos from Santa Monica to Glendale). Mr. Zbur is formerly the Executive Director of Equality California, as well as past president of the California League of Conservation Voters. During his remarks, Zbur spoke about the inspiration he received from his father, who drilled into his children the importance of education and public service. He added that he is currently working on addressing homelessness, and fighting against antisemitism.

The 2024 Excellence in Education Award was presented to Deborah Prothrow-Stith MD '79, an accomplished public health educator and Dean of the College of Medicine at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in South Los Angeles. Dr. Prothrow-Stith is noted for transforming the institution from a two-year arm of UCLA Medical School into a full four-year MD-grant-

ing medical school serving one of the most underserved, disadvantaged areas in the nation.

The Club presented the **Fred Smith Award for Distinguished Alumni Service** to six alumni leaders who have given many years of loyal and steadfast service. These leaders include Marsha Hirano-Nakanishi EdD '81, an HCSC Vice President, Membership; Past HCSC Club President George Newhouse '76, who received the award a second time; Eva Plaza '80, a long-time HCSC Vice President, Schools; A.J. Rogers MD '79, an HCSC Vice President, Orange County; Ethel Seminario-Laczko EdM '84; and past HCSC President Kenneth S. Williams '78.



Our Annual Dinner is always one of our most popular events, where in addition to recognizing key community and club leaders, we install our new board members for terms that began on July 1.



Fred Smith Award Recipients (left to right) George Newhouse '76, Marsha Hirano-Nakanishi EdD '81, Eva Plaza '80, and A.J. Rogers MD '79 are thanked for their many years of service to the Harvard Club by Joan Chu Reese '85.

Recent Events

Griffith Park Hike: Fern Dell to Griffith Observatory

On Saturday, June 22, 2024, Harvard Club members gathered for a delightful morning hike from Fern Dell to Griffith Observatory in Griffith Park. The event kicked off at Griffith Park's Trails Cafe, where participants enjoyed a warm cup of coffee and engaged in light conversation before embarking on the hike.

The group of 12 hikers set out on the 2.6-mile loop trail, which offered a mix of nature and exercise. The trail itself provided a refreshing and scenic environment as we made our way up Western Canyon.

The hike took approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, allowing ample time to appreciate the natural surroundings and enjoy each other's company.

Upon reaching the Griffith Observatory, participants took in the stunning views of Los Angeles from the high vantage point. The group discussed various points of the city, sharing insights and stories, enriching the experience.

Thank you to all the members who joined this wonderful outing. We look forward to seeing you at our next event!



Upcoming Events

OC Coffee & Networking

Enjoy some of OC's best coffee/tea and have a casual chat with fellow alumni!

SAT, SEP 7 @ 10:00AM

Stereoscope Coffee (Newport Beach)

No charge, cash coffee bar



Recent Grads Event: Welcome To Your City LA 2024

Join us for this special event for new alumni who live in Los Angeles or have plans to move there. The evening will offer new arrivals a welcome to Los Angeles, while providing an opportunity for recent grads in the area to connect.

WED, SEP 11 @ 6:00PM

Mama Shelter Hotel's Rooftop (Los Angeles)

No charge



Day Trip to Catalina Island

Join us for an unforgettable group trip to Catalina Island with the Harvard Club of SoCal. Get ready for an exciting adventure as we embark on a trip to beautiful Catalina Island.

SAT, SEP 14 @ 7:15AM

Catalina Island (leaving from Long Beach)

\$85, members; \$95, nonmembers



A Conversation with Harvard President Garber

All members of the Harvard community are invited to a special in-person event with President Alan Garber '77, PhD '82. Please join us at the Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, September 16, when President Garber will share his vision for Harvard's future, provide insight into the University's priorities, and report on progress on campus.

MON, SEP 16 @ 6:30PM

Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles (Beverly Hills)

\$25, Alumni, guests, and members of the Harvard community



Brandon Kwon '24



Brandon Kwon '24, a concentrator in Molecular and Cellular Biology, was born in Los Angeles, CA, and graduated as the valedictorian from Valencia High School. He served as captain of the school debate team, qualifying for the state championship, and led the officially licensed TEDx organization, hosting local events and delivering two TED talks of his own. He resided in Winthrop House. At Harvard, he served as the president of the Harvard College Undergraduate Research Association and was involved in other organizations such as the World Prehealth Conference, the Harvard Institute of Politics, and club tennis for a bit of fun.

Most of his academic time, however, was spent at Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Children's Hospital, where he worked on cardiac and immunology-based research projects. He spent most of his undergraduate summers working in these labs. Recently, his thesis project with the Alessandrini Lab was awarded the Henderson Prize for the best thesis in the Biochemical Sciences Department. Brandon was also selected as a Fulbright Scholar and, after graduation, will be in South Korea working on a public health project with the dean of Seoul National University's School of Public Health.

HCSC: What surprised you about being a student at Harvard?

BK: I used to criticize Harvard as my way of coping with the fact that it seemed impossible to get in. I told myself that Harvard people were snobby and egotistical—not the kind I'd enjoy spending four years with. However, I have found that's not the case. Harvard people are normal, approachable, and offer great insights. This diversity and balance of intellectual ambition and fun are things I truly appreciate about Harvard. They are qualities I don't come by often at other schools when I visit friends.

HCSC: When was the first time you visited Harvard, and what were your impressions at that time?

BK: The first time I visited Harvard was during a college tour with my family. Everything was new to me, and my only knowledge of the place came from what I had read online or seen in movies. The sight of so many buildings constructed from red bricks felt strange and unfamiliar. The brisk pace of life on the East Coast was equally disorienting. I even touched the foot of the statue, unaware of the story behind it—sometimes ignorance truly is bliss. At that time, being admitted to Harvard seemed like an unattainable dream. Harvard seemed more like a famous landmark than a college, and I feel incredibly lucky and privileged to have been proven wrong.

HCSC: What was your favorite class (or professor) and why?

BK: My favorite class was GHHP 50: Quality of Healthcare in America. Very premed—I know—but the overall structure and flow of the class embodied what I always imagined a Harvard class would be like. It was intellectually stimulating, with student-driven seminars where the professor wasn't just trying to convince us of something, but rather facilitating a discussion and learning alongside us. Not only did I learn more about our healthcare systems, but I also gained invaluable life lessons—such as truly embracing the importance of reaching out a helping hand to those who may have nothing to offer you in return, even though doing so sounds pretty obvious. On top of that, Dr. Anupam Jena was very friendly, down to earth, and overall a class act.

HCSC: What was your funniest moment at Harvard?

BK: There's a lot to pick from, but one of my most memorable nights was during River Run. It was during the COVID year, so the experience was even more surreal as we tried to get into houses with no upperclassmen to let us

in. I remember we were walking around, obviously not completely sober, when my friend somehow managed to take off a stop sign. He started using it as a shield and picked up a branch to duel me. Naturally, I engaged, and soon a bunch of students randomly joined in on this impromptu medieval-like duel in the street right next to Adams' Claverly Hall. The night only got crazier. My friend had fallen off a penny board in the middle of Winthrop Hall, spilling Powerade all over the walls. By the end of it, we ended up lying on the sidewalk next to the Beren entrance, doing karaoke under the stars. It was one of those nights that felt straight out of a movie, filled with spontaneous and unforgettable moments.

HCSC: If you were President of Harvard, what would change?

BK: I wish I had more meaningful things to say in this regard, but most of my concerns are just small things that have been bugging students. For instance, Harvard University Dining Service often starts strong but then the quality seems to drop, so it would be great to maintain a consistently high benchmark. Allowing students to use the air conditioning during the first month of school would also make a big difference. Additionally, I'd love to bring back Shopping Week instead of having to pre-pick all our classes before the next semester starts. Shopping Week has always been so helpful, and students often find ways around the current system anyway. Many small changes like these could significantly improve the quality of life for everyone.

HCSC: What do you miss most about Southern California (other than the weather, food and family)?

BK: What I miss most about Southern California are the little things, like driving and the beach. There's something liberating about cruising down the Pacific Coast Highway with the windows down, the ocean breeze flowing in, and the radio playing your favorite songs. The scenery is stunning, and there's a unique sense of freedom and adventure that comes with those drives. I also miss the laid-back culture. Life in Southern California has a relaxed, easy-going vibe that I find refreshing. People tend to take things a little more lightly, and that attitude can be a great reminder to slow down and appreciate the moment.

HCSC: How do you think Southern California will figure into your future after Harvard?

BK: Southern California is ultimately where I want to end up. While all my immediate plans involve working at East Coast institutions, my long-term goal is to work as a surgeon at a hospital in Southern California.

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CLUB NEWSLETTER/ WEBSITE

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This newsletter accepts items for publication. Materials must be submitted by the 12th of the prior month to appear in the following newsletter. Please include a phone number or email address with all submissions. Email submissions to: info@harvardsocal.org.

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THE HARVARD CLUB
of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar of Upcoming Events

For more information on events and general club news, visit the club website at www.harvardsocal.org.

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