

Working for Obama



Reuters News

Indira Henard '03 knows what it means to work for change. At Wheaton, Henard was one of the most active student leaders on campus; since graduating, she has channeled her drive into a career in politics. It is fitting, then, that Henard is now working for a man whose own meteoric rise has been fueled by a powerful call for change: Illinois senator and Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama.

"I am not surprised that she is working for Obama," says longtime political science professor Darlene Boroviak, whom Henard credits as one of her mentors. "'Change' was Indira's mantra when she was at Wheaton."

So was hard work. As a student, Henard kept a busy schedule—she served for years on the student government's executive board, leading both the intercultural and the education councils, and served on a host of other student and adminis-

trative committees—all while earning her degree in political science.

Henard, who is special assistant to Obama's chief legal counsel, says her passion for politics flows out of her desire to tackle the inequalities that still plague our society—whether in her hometown of Chicago, on campus at Wheaton, or across the country as she works on Senator Obama's presidential campaign.

And it was Henard's days as a student activist at Wheaton that gave her a crash course in how politics works. "I really learned the ins and outs of negotiating, building coalitions, and working with people who are different than I am—but also coming together for a common purpose," Henard, now 27, said in a recent interview from the campaign trail.

In recognition of her leadership on campus, Henard won the college's Joseph M. and Susan Stampler Paresky '68

Fellowship, and used it to earn a master's degree in political science and international relations at the University of Chicago. After graduate school, Henard won another fellowship, spending a year in Washington, D.C., as a liaison to the federal government for the governor of Illinois.

Soon after that experience ended, Henard got an e-mail from a fellow Wheaton graduate, suggesting that she apply to a training program that her fellow Chicagoan, Senator Obama, was setting up with the goal of bringing more minorities into the top ranks of political campaigns. Henard was one of 10 people selected for the Yes We Can program, and during the intense, weeklong seminar the group learned every detail of campaigning.

After working on the 2006 midterm elections, Henard took a position in Obama's Senate office. Henard is particularly proud of her role as Obama's

liaison to the powerful Congressional Black Caucus, where she focuses on issues of interest to the black community, such as the recent controversy over the Jena Six in Louisiana.

Henard began working for Obama just as his presidential bid got under way, and soon she had a second job—as an aide to his presidential campaign. Like most campaign workers, Henard does a little of everything; she tromped through the snow in New Hampshire, meeting voters before that state's pivotal primary, and later went to South Carolina to travel with Obama's wife, Michelle, as she campaigned for the senator there.

Henard is relishing her role in a historic campaign. "It's a great job," she said. "I look at [Obama] and his conviction and what he stands for, and I see that it is possible, it's very much possible, to move this country in a new direction." □

—Ted Nesi '07

Love and care

Long before they arrived at Wheaton, Kendra Ward '00, L.Ac., and Igor Schwartzman '98, N.D., each had an interest in the practice of healing. That mutual interest deepened and drew them together as psychobiology majors. And now the married couple share a medical practice that has a natural-healing approach.

After several years of working separately, they combined their efforts in January to create the Whole Family Wellness Center in Portland, Ore. Ward is a licensed acupuncturist, and Schwartzman is a trained naturopathic primary care physician.

Ward suffered severe asthma and allergies when she was young and her mother took her to an acupuncturist for help. "Not only did my asthma improve, but I was left deeply fascinated by this very different

way of approaching the body," she said.

Now Ward, who has a master's of acupuncture and oriental medicine from the New England School of Acupuncture, provides a range of healthcare services under an Eastern model of working with and understanding the body. She primarily uses acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, and a range of other techniques, such as traditional Chinese massage and heat therapy to address women's health issues.

Schwartzman's grandmother was a physician. "As a young child, I had several opportunities to observe some of her patients come in and out of her office. What I noticed the most was the smiles on people's faces as they left her office. When I asked her about what she did with people that put a smile on their faces,



Kendra Ward '00, L.Ac.

she replied, 'The most important thing you can do for any person is to listen to them...not simply with your ears, but your heart.'"


Ward and Schwartzman both aim to do that everyday in their work. "As a doctor, I encourage people to be empowered and active in their health process," he said.

They have been married for two years. They were research partners at Wheaton, which was a great source of inspiration for them both.

"Wheaton helped me distill out all of my varied interests so that I was able to find a path that suited me as an individual," said Ward. "And I feel thankful to Wheaton for offering a major like psychobiology, which is unusual in its own right. It really allowed me to take my interest in science to a whole other level."

After Wheaton, Schwartzman spent several years at the Harvard School of Public Health, involved in asthma

research studies. During that same time, he pursued a doctoral degree in anatomy and physiology at Boston University. Ward worked at the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, helping with clinical studies in her field, such as investigating the connection between stress, aging and memory.

Using a natural approach to healing can be challenging in a society that wants a pill for everything, but the two are very successful in their work. "Within our culture, we are trained to expect quick fixes," said Ward. "But our philosophy toward medicine is to not simply treat the symptom, but to understand the core reasons for why the symptom has arisen in the first place. This approach requires education, time and patience, but is much more effective over the long term." 

For more information about the practice, visit www.wholefamily-wellnesscenter.com.





A new anti-discrimination commissioner

Sunila Thomas-George '91 has been named a commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination by Governor Deval Patrick.

An expert in employment discrimination, Thomas-George has been an attorney with the commission since 1997, serving in a number of capacities. The agency investigates and prosecutes cases on discrimination based on race, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation and age to name a few. It also handles discrimination claims in employment, housing, places of public accommodation, credit and education.

"I am thrilled to be part of the Patrick administration, knowing that the governor is passionate and concerned about civil rights and the importance of our agency and mission," she said.

At the commission, Thomas-George has managed a staff of attorneys and worked closely with the commissioners, the chief of enforcement, and the

general counsel on substantive and procedural issues before the commission. She also assisted in drafting the MCAD Disability and Sexual Harassment Guidelines. She has been a Certified Trainer in Discrimination and Harassment Prevention since 2001. She is one of three commissioners for the agency and works in the Boston office.

Thomas-George says she became interested in discrimination law in law school, but credits Wheaton with motivating her to become an attorney.

"My desire to go to law school started in my junior year at Wheaton when I took one of Professor [of Political Science] Jay Goodman's classes," she recalled. "It really got me thinking of the possibilities that one could achieve by having a background in law. Also, the classes that I took as a political science major were instrumental in my decision to go to law school."

Thomas-George has received a number of awards including

the Executive Branch Award for Excellence in Government Legal Services in 2004 and the Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service in 2001. After earning an undergraduate degree from Wheaton, she received her law degree from Western New England College School of Law in 1995.

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination is the Commonwealth's chief civil rights agency. The commission works to eliminate discrimination on a variety of bases and areas, and strives to advance the civil rights of the people of the Commonwealth through law enforcement, outreach and training.

In addition to the Boston location, the commission has offices in Springfield and Worcester and is planning to open another office in New Bedford. "Hopefully, this will ensure that people know we are out there and reachable for many," said Thomas-George.

Grants recently received from the EEOC and HUD will help

the commission start programs that will target discriminatory practices against certain socio-economic groups. There are also plans to develop a Discrimination Prevention unit to focus on employers, landlords and businesses to help them create and develop anti-discrimination policies and be better prepared to implement them.

"We have also begun more outreach to many agencies, employers, bar advocates and community groups looking for assistance in helping us reach our goals on case processing and timely completion," said Thomas-George. "I am looking forward to the many challenges we face in trying to increase our funding so that we can continue to improve on the quality of processing these important cases and also be able to expand our outreach efforts to more communities that may not understand what their rights are and how we can be of help to them." □

—Michael Graca

Alumna inspires dining room honor

The oldest women's college club in America, The College Club of Boston, will honor member and Wheaton alumna Janet Carr Bayley '45 by naming the soon-to-be-redecorated dining area The Wheaton Dining Room.

Bayley (who shies away from the spotlight and asked that her photograph not be taken) has been a member of the 117-year-old club for more than 25 years. She has not attended many programs at the club and has only stayed at the 11-room guesthouse once. But her friendship with and admiration of two of the club's members has kept her connected and interested in supporting the club, which hosts social events, professional development programs and lectures, and raises scholarship money for high school seniors.

She first met her two friends at the Old South Church, where she was the treasurer of the women's guild. "I used to go to church every Sunday.... Churches are very busy places and you meet a lot of very interesting people," Bayley said during an interview this spring.

A chemistry major at Wheaton, Bayley worked for a time in a Washington, D.C., lab for Lever Brothers, a soap manufacturer. In later years, she worked for a bookstore chain and traveled extensively. In 1996, she took a world tour with her brother, and she has gone on trips organized by Wheaton graduates. She remains a generous supporter of Wheaton.

These days, Bayley stays close to her north of Boston home. She has given up golf and bowling, but still plays bridge every week. She has been particularly energized by the upcoming renovations at the club, which is located in a Victorian brownstone.

Some of Boston's most prominent designers will redecorate the

drawing room, dining room, and 11 bed-and-breakfast guest rooms, which are named in honor of Boston area colleges.

Bayley was a prime catalyst for the restoration project, said Kim Clark, a member of the club's board of directors. "So extraordinary was Janet's commitment to the project, the executive board of The College Club was moved to name the dining room in honor of her alma mater.

"She is a woman possessed of clear vision and cheerful determination. She has been a source of inspiration to many," said Clark.

"It will be done and done right" is an oft-quoted phrase she's been known to pronounce when faced with an important task."

Starting in June, the dining room will be redecorated by Boston designer Lisey Good. "My nods to Wheaton will be in the color choices for the fabrics in the room—school colors, royal blue and white, and possibly the new wall color. One of my favorite colors is called Whole Wheat, so that seems oddly appropriate," said Good, who also plans to hang historical photos of Wheaton. □



The Wheaton Dining Room at The College Club of Boston before renovation

SELECTED REGIONAL EVENTS

Boston June 11

El Greco to Velazquez exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts. Reception and lecture by Professor Evelyn Staudinger Lane prior to viewing, 5:30–7:30 p.m. Coordinated by the Alumnae/i Office.

Seattle August 24

Seattle Mariners vs. Oakland A's (and outfielder Christopher Denorfia '02), Safeco Field, Seattle. Game time, 1 p.m.; reception, time to be determined. Coordinated by Deborah Kreutzer Wintner '92.

Boston September 20

Walking tour of the Flat of Beacon Hill, led by Margy Bratschi '78, followed by a reception at the home of Sandra Sable Gilpatrick '95. Time to be determined. Coordinated by the Greater Boston Wheaton Club.

Boston September 25

Boston Red Sox vs. Cleveland Indians. Fenway Park, Boston, game time, 7:05 p.m.; reception, time to be determined. Coordinated by the Alumnae/i Office.

For the latest events calendar, please visit OnLyon at www.wheatoncollege.edu/alum/ and click on the calendar grid. Also, for the list of Wheaton clubs, regional contacts and Filene Center Liaisons, go to www.wheatoncollege.edu/alum/class/clubcontacts.html