

# UHA News



The monthly newsletter for the community and partners of the University Heights Association.

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## First annual Mara Oakes Memorial Scholarship awarded

Franchesca Fernandez, a member of the Albany Law School Class of 2006, is the first recipient of the Mara Oakes Memorial Scholarship.



*Franchesca Fernandez, the 2005 scholarship recipient, and Albany Law School Dean Thomas Guernsey*

The \$1,000 scholarship, in memory of UHA public relations

coordinator and office manager Mara Oakes, will be presented annually to a second-year student from one of UHA's member institutions. Demonstrating the characteristics that made Mara a beloved member of the UHA community from 1999 until her tragic death in 2004, the recipient must be a person of exceptional energy and enthusiasm who has worked tirelessly to bring people together to support their college, other organizations or the community.

A native of Queens, N.Y., Fernandez has worked passionately to ensure that the need for diversity in the legal community remains a top priority at Albany

Law School. She is involved in



*From left to right: Larry Berman, Maryann Berman, Franchesca Fernandez, Sanford Berman, Margo Berman, Chris Oakes*

several extracurricular activities, playing an active role in bridging the cultural gap between students and raising student awareness about the need for diversity in the legal community.

## Albany native receives top prize in medicine

Robert S. Langer, Ph.D., a chemical engineer whose groundbreaking research with polymers revolutionized the field of drug delivery systems and helped spawn the new field of tissue engineering, is the 2005 recipient of the \$500,000 Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research, America's top prize in medicine.

Dr. Langer, a native of Albany who was born at Albany Hospital, the forerunner to Albany Medical Center, is one of 14 Institute Professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the highest distinction awarded to a faculty member there. This year marks the first time an Albany native has won the prestigious award, said James J. Barba, Chairman, President and CEO of Albany Medical Center, who called Dr. Langer "a true hometown hero."

"The world owes an infinite debt of gratitude to Dr. Langer for his pioneering work in the field of drug delivery systems that has improved the lives of more than 60



*Dr. Robert Langer lights a candle signifying that he is the fifth recipient of the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research.*

million people each year," he said.

"Dr. Langer's work has spawned revolutionary advances in cancer treatment, given birth to a new field of biotechnology known as tissue engineering and most recently fueled the development of cardiac stents that have virtually eliminated the risk of restenosis in patients undergoing treatment for cardiovascular disease."

Now in its fifth year, the Albany Medical Center Prize is the largest prize in medicine in the United States and second worldwide to the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine.

Dr. Langer was selected for the award for his entire body of scientific work, most notably his seminal research on polymer-based drug delivery systems, which has allowed clinicians to manage the release of large molecules in a slow, steady and controlled manner.

## Local Life - Upcoming Events

Deleware Ave. Neighborhood Association (DANA) meeting on Thursday, June 9 at 7 p.m. at the

V.E.W., 525 Delaware Ave.

Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit Strawberry Festival will be

held on Thursday, June 16 from 7 to 9 p.m. at 57 Hurlbut St.

University Heights Association was established in 1995 to create an academic/medical consortium of international stature. The four member institutions - Albany Law School, Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany Medical College and The Sage Colleges - are a unique collaboration promoting quality education, premium health care, public discourse of important issues, cutting-edge research and technology, vibrant neighborhoods and progressive private and public partnerships. UHA continues to build upon a network of shared resources to enrich academic connections for the benefit of students, faculty, staff and the surrounding neighborhoods.

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## DID YOU KNOW ...

*UHA institutions award over \$11 million in scholarships during an academic year?!\**

*\*Based on figures from 2003-2005*

## Graduations signal end of another academic year for UHA schools

Nearly 1,100 students became the newest graduates of the four UHA schools in May. Here is a glance at this year's commencement activities at Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany Law School, Albany Medical College and The Sage Colleges.

**ACP:** New York State Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno delivered the address May 8 as ACP awarded 107 degrees at its 125th commencement at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center. This year's graduates included the first two students to earn ACP's new bachelor of science in pharmaceutical sciences, and 103 who earned the doctor of pharmacy.

**ALS:** Hon. Joseph C. Teresi of the New York Supreme Court, Third Department, delivered the address at Albany Law School's 154th commencement May 28 at the Palace Theater in Albany. Two hundred and forty-four students received a juris doctor degree and seven earned a master of laws and letters, an advanced degree for attorneys.

**AMC:** Herbert Boyer, Ph.D., a recipient of the 2004 Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research, delivered the

main address May 26 at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center as the college awarded 175 degrees, including 122 medical degrees. Eleven candidates received Ph.D. degrees, 16 earned M.S. degrees in the basic sciences, 16 earned M.S. degrees in clinical sciences (physician assistants and nurse anesthetists) and 10 earned M.S. degrees in bioethics. It was the college's 167th commencement.

**SAGE:** A total of 556 students graduated at The Sage Colleges' 89th commencement May 8 in Troy. New degrees this year included 30 doctorates in physical therapy from Sage Graduate School and 24 bachelor of fine arts degrees from Sage College of Albany. Russell Sage College graduated 170 women, including Diane Vanwie of Albany, who at age 70 personifies lifelong learning: She received her bachelor's degree in English and psychology after 52 years as a student at the college. The address was given by career diplomat Prudence Bushnell '80, dean of the Leadership and Management School at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Va., and a Sage Graduate School alumna.



June McQuide, Executive Director

## Thoughts from the Executive Director:

Awarding the first Mara Oakes Memorial Scholarship was bittersweet for all of us who gathered for the presentation. Mara's husband, parents, aunt and uncle were especially grateful to have the opportunity to meet Franchesca Fernandez, the first recipient, and to honor Mara and her energy and enthusiasm for UHA. I know UHA's ever-increasing collaborations and programs would thrill Mara. She and I used to be regular lunchtime walkers, and I know she would have been very excited to organize America on the Move, our most recent initiative promoting healthy lifestyles. To be self-sustaining, her scholarship fund requires an additional \$14,000. I ask everyone to help us reach our goal with a contribution to the Mara Oakes Memorial Scholarship Fund. All tax-deductible donations can be mailed to The Community Foundation for the Capital Region, Six Tower Place, Albany, NY 12203.

[www.universityheights.org](http://www.universityheights.org)

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