Remembering David Rockefeller and Abby O’Neill

In Spring 2017, our community lost two dedicated and longtime Trustees and friends. David Rockefeller had served as a Trustee since 1940 and his niece Abby O’Neill had served as a Trustee since 1958. Both made tremendous contributions to the institution through their board leadership, wisdom and generosity. This spring I-House hosted memorial events for each of these pivotal figures in our history. Hundreds came to celebrate their life and achievements, as well as their contributions to the legacy of I-House.

A Home for Every Generation

The I-House Experience – learning and sharing each day with hundreds of bright minds from around the world – is an illuminating time for Residents. It is also something that stays with and is cherished by Alumni for years to come.

Dr. Walter Munk is professor emeritus of geophysics in the Cecil H. and Ida M. Green Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California. As a young military scientist during World War II, his work in wave forecasting became essential in planning key Allied invasions including the D-Day landings of 1944. His innovative work has led him to be known as the “Einstein of the oceans.”

But before his storied career in science, between 1935 and 1937 Munk lived at International House. As a young man from Vienna, he chose to live at 500 Riverside Drive while working in his family’s banking business. He describes his time in banking simply: “I hated every minute of it!” But living at I-House allowed him to escape that world, find encouragement and “keep the intellect going.” He recalls the kindness of John Mott, director of International House from 1935-55, and his wife Celestine, both of whom helped guide him toward his true passion.

In June 2017, Dr. Munk, who will turn 100 on October 19, 2017, returned to the House for the first time, nearly 80 years since his days as a Resident.

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Open House NY at International House
Saturday and Sunday,
October 14-15, 12-4 pm

Return to the House you once called home. Join us for a weekend of Resident-guided tours and musical performances that are sure to spark great memories.

I-House Days
Connect with Alumni in your corner of the world at these fun events celebrating the spirit of I-House.

- Frankfurt Tuesday, October 24
- Shanghai Saturday, October 28
- Hong Kong Tuesday, October 31
- Dubai Thursday, November 2
- Singapore Saturday, November 4
- New Jersey Monday, November 6
- Berlin Friday, November 24

Check your email for information on 2017 I-House Days in other locations including Canada, Florence, and London. Sign up for updates on events in your area or to volunteer as an I-House Day Organizer in your region at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/IHDays

Fall Fiesta
Friday, November 3, Davis Hall
Just as fun and exciting as you remember it!

Alumni in Action:
Peter Vanham ’13, Santiago Wills ’12
Wednesday, November 15, 7-9 pm, Home Room

Alumnus Peter Vanham (Belgium) discusses his book Before I Was CEO: Life Stories and Lessons from Leaders Before They Reached the Top with fellow alum and writer Santiago Wills (Colombia).

Alumni in Action:
Ruth Waterman ’68
Thursday, November 30, 7-9 pm, Dodge Room

The I-House Alumna is an acclaimed violinist and author of the award-winning book, When Swan Lake Comes to Sarajevo. She returns to the House to share her story.

Sunday Supper
Sunday, December 3, Davis Hall

This time-honored tradition remains one of the most memorable experiences of life at the House.

Stay up to date: Check the web calendar for new events and visit the House on your next trip to NYC! For more information about these and other events contact Julie Pape, Alumni Relations Officer, at jpape@ihouse-nyc.org.
Life at the House

Gilbert King discussing his Pulitzer Prize-winning book Devil in the Grove (February 2017)

Dinner and conversation with Ambassador Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations (March 2017)

Grammy Award-winning musician Kinan Azmeh ’04 in concert at I-House (April 2017)

Candlelight Sunday Supper (April 2017)

At the annual All Nations Celebration – one of the biggest cultural events of the year at I-House – hundreds of Residents and Alumni gathered to celebrate their community’s incredible diversity with dance performances, international food tastings, the Cultural Arcade, and a late-night dance party (May 2017)

For information on 2017-18 events, visit www.ihouse-nyc.org
A Celebration of Words and Music for and by I-House Alumni

This past winter, “Music at I-House: Then and Now,” a curated concert series, celebrated the words and music of some of the most famous former Residents of International House, with exciting interpretations from current Residents and visiting Alumni. In addition to Resident performers from Juilliard, Manhattan School of Music, NYU and Mannes, the series also included memorable contributions by highly talented musicians studying engineering, economics, law, education and more. For each evening, the Main Lounge was transformed to reflect the artistry of the programs.

Celebrating the Words and Music of Leonard Cohen ’57
January 24, 2017

“When I read about this concert, I changed my flight back to Australia so I could be here!”
– Chris Coffman ’81

The Music and Legacy of Leontyne Price ’52
February 9, 2017

Donovan Singletary ’10, a New York-based baritone who made his debut at La Scala in January 2017, returned to the House on the day of a blizzard to sing “Ol’ Man River” from “Porgy and Bess.”

“The Internationals” – an Original I-House Musical by Emily Rose Simons ’17 (UK)
March 23, 2017

Featuring a cast of 24 Residents, both professional and amateur, and directed by Alex Notkin ’15 (Israel), “The Internationals” addressed issues of inclusiveness, acceptance and unity, and showcased the talent and diversity within I-House.

A Tribute to Sakura Sweethearts
April 20, 2017

Fondly named “Sakura Sweethearts,” the couples of I-House span generations. For one night a year, Residents come together for music, poetry and a bit of inspiration to honor the romances that began within our Riverside Drive home.
A Home for Every Generation

(continued from cover)

Making his way through the Main Lounge, the memories came flooding back. “I am so deeply grateful for the friendships I made here, that persisted even after I left,” he said. “I continue to be served by the relationships formed in this House.”

As part of his visit, he asked to meet with current Residents to share stories of his time here and how it influenced him personally and professionally, and to offer advice to a new generation of leaders.

Over breakfast with the group, he fondly recalled his life at I-House – organizing ski trips, conversations over dinners, even old girlfriends. Browsing through I-House yearbooks from his Resident years, he was quick to point out familiar faces. “Meeting people from all over the world is a unique possibility here,” he said. “There is something about that experience that makes friendships last.”

Despite his lifetime of achievements, Dr. Munk wondered aloud whether he would be admitted to I-House as a Resident today. New Alumnus Takaya Uchida, who is pursuing his PhD in Oceanography at Columbia University, was quick to reassure him: “We would love to have you here!”

Read more of Dr. Munk’s story and watch a video of his visit at www.ihouse-nyc.org/WalterMunk

Celebrating the Achievement of I-House Residents

International House is proud to celebrate Residents who have recently received top honors for their academic and leadership achievements at their schools.

Tosin Adeniji (United Kingdom)
Presented the student address at the Johnson Recognition Ceremony at Cornell University, part of the 2017 Cornell Tech MBA commencement events.

Dazzle Bhujwala (India)
Awarded the 2017 SPS Student Leadership Award by the School of Professional Studies at Columbia University in recognition of his role in launching and leading the Columbia Sustainable Finance Professionals Network and exceeding the expectations of a student leader in his contributions to the SPS community.

Gonzalo Go III (Philippines)
Gave the 2017 commencement address for Columbia University’s LLM program.

Jessika Graterol (Venezuela)
Won the 2017 Dyson College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Graduate of the Year Award at Pace University.

Ivan Gusev (Russia)

Mamoon Khalid (Saudi Arabia)
Recognized by the New York University Tandon School of Engineering for Outstanding Academic Achievement in MS Computer Engineering for the Class of 2017.

James Kopanidis (Australia)
Received the 2017 SPS Dean’s Excellence Student Award during the Graduation Ceremony for Columbia University’s School of Professional Studies.

Andrew Junglin Yang (United States)
Awarded the 2017 Steinway and Sons Award, a top distinction for an outstanding pianist at the Mannes School of Music. This award also came with a cash prize, funded by Steinway and Sons.
Gabriel H. Cohn ’60
Received the Honorary Citizenship of Jerusalem and recently published a new book, *Textual Tapestries – Explorations on the Five Megillot*.

Dr. Erol S. Gelenbe ’68
Elected Fellow of the Royal Academy of Arts, Sciences and Letters of Belgium and awarded Knight of the Legion of Honour of France.

Dr. Hayden Huang ’14
Promoted to research associate at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. As the corresponding author, recently published a paper on drug resistance of viral infections in adult patients undergoing bone marrow transplants, which was presented at the Infectious Diseases Society of America’s annual IDweek conference in October 2016.

Diana Engel Gerbase ’16
Launched a nonprofit civic education initiative, Mobis, in her home country of Brazil. The project grew out of a Davis Projects for Peace grant that enabled her to pilot a new curriculum to encourage children to become engaged citizens.

Tauriq Jenkins ’16
Worked on a film project with acclaimed actor John Savage (“The Deer Hunter”). “It was a fun shoot, being chased by sharks, with a flavor of an international cast and crew from the US, Luxembourg, UK and South Africa. Quite like an I-House collaboration in Davis!”
What is your background?
I am from Nigeria and was raised in Houston; I now live in Harlem. I studied at Baylor University, where I received a BA, and Columbia University, where I received an MA. I currently work as an analytics strategist and project manager in financial services.

Tell us about your work
Since leaving I-House, I have worked for education management firms, New York City government and now a Fortune 100 financial institution. I have also done meaningful work for non-profit education initiatives and served locally on community and education councils and the Manhattan Borough President’s Computer Science and African Immigrant task forces.

How did living at International House contribute to your worldview?
Living at International House taught me that no one people, race or creed has a monopoly on great ideas and talent. I’ve met brilliant people from across the globe and learned to appreciate differences. This is an important perspective to have as I now work on a global team. It allows me to lead juniors and learn from mentors who are different from me.

What are you most proud of?
Starting my women’s empowerment nonprofit WomenWerk (womenwerk.com), which is now approaching its fifth year of offering consistent programming for women in the New York-New Jersey area. Also being named among the 2017 City & State New York Above and Beyond Women and being selected as a 2017 Council of Urban Professionals Fellow.

What lessons from International House did you bring with you into your fieldwork as you piloted WomenWerk?
Diplomacy is one key lesson that I learned at International House and use daily. As a Resident Fellow and Resident Council member, I regularly had to work with people from across the world with different perspectives. Through those experiences, I learned to see things with empathy and strengthen my ability to effectively communicate my ideas to build cohesion.

What lessons can you offer fellow I-House Alumni who are hoping to follow in your footsteps and launch a non-profit of their own?
Find the right group of people to mentor and guide you. After a tough first year building WomenWerk, I learned the importance of partnering with allied organizations and finding individuals who believe in and are willing to invest in your cause for the long haul. It really takes a village to be successful in the social impact business.

What do you miss about living at International House?
I miss the social interactions with people working in different sectors and with different passions. It can be difficult to do so now with the busy schedule friends keep and we all live in different parts of the city.

What is your fondest memory or connection from your time at International House?
The Sunday Suppers. It was great to gather as a community. The Suppers had amazing speakers and meaningful networking, which I will always cherish.
More than just a house, I-House is a home where we learn and share values. It serves as a place where Residents build meaningful connections, and achieve personal and professional growth that can positively affect their communities and, perhaps one day, the world.

**Mehemed Bougsea**

Now beginning his third year as an I-House Resident, Mehemed was born in Germany and is a citizen of Libya. He studies International Development at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs, and has already built an impressive résumé in launching and supporting innovative social enterprises.

**What brought you to I-House?**

I was already in New York when I met people that lived at I-House; it was through a soccer game at Riverside Park. When I visited, I was just astounded by the number of people that lived here, and the different backgrounds they had, so I decided to apply.

**What encouraged you to renew each year?**

I always had trouble finding a place where I could speak four languages that I love: Arabic, German, English and French. I came to this place and on my very first day I met probably four people from every one of these regions that spoke the language. I just felt at home.

**How has living at I-House influenced your work?**

In summer 2016, I worked with the first online university for refugees, Kiron Open High Education, which now offers access to Syrian refugees in Turkey. Kiron was not present in Turkey when I started. I was asked to help the organization scale into that region by building and managing a team of different cultures: Turkish natives familiar with the country’s logistics and legal framework, Syrian entrepreneurs and students, and Kiron staff in Germany.

Managing teams while being aware of multiple cultures was something I had been exposed to at I-House, so I had the confidence to do it after moving to Turkey from my International House south room.

Also, I was able to focus my time in Turkey on building this organization – as opposed to taking a side job – because of the financial aid I received through I-House as a Dodge Scholar. Without it, I may not have been able to take on this experience.

**So what’s next?**

I was awarded a 2017 Employment Innovation Fellowship through I-House. I spent this summer in Tunisia developing Think.iT, a startup I co-founded, which trains young people for jobs in the tech sector. Returning to Columbia, I’ll focus on courses in technologies for economic empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa. I’ll also be working to raise social impact investments for Think.iT to scale our activities in Tunisia. We believe it’s possible to train 50,000 young people in remotely based tech-sector jobs and connect them with top firms globally by 2025.

Learn more about giving back to the House at [www.ihouse-nyc.org/donate](http://www.ihouse-nyc.org/donate)
Maham Sadiq: An Engineer Committed to the Economic Development of Her Native Pakistan

For generations, Maham Sadiq’s family lived in a rural village in Pakistan called Fateh Pur. It’s been just two decades – within Maham’s 25-year lifetime – since the village first gained access to electricity.

Motivated by her dream to create solutions for a future where rural areas are no longer left behind, Maham is completing her Masters in Sustainability at Columbia University. She has also been living at International House since Fall 2016, gaining valuable lessons in leadership beyond her course work.

“The Women’s International Leadership (WIL) program has been the highlight of my time here,” she said. “What makes the program exceptional is the focused curriculum and opportunity to learn from peers and mentors in different professions and academic areas.”

Mentorship and Leadership

She particularly values her relationship with her WIL mentor, Lauren States (pictured with Maham above), an International House Trustee and, like Maham, an engineer. States has guided Maham in refining her career goals, presentation skills and networking. “I come from a culture and a country where mentoring is not common. I really value the opportunity to get to know Lauren and learn from her.”

Even before arriving at I-House, Maham was developing her leadership skills. She represented Pakistan during the Millennium Development Goals Summit, the World Model United Nations, and the Human Rights Council at Model United Nations. While in college, she organized a national leadership conference for students to discuss solutions to Pakistan’s longstanding conflict with India, as well as terrorism and the country’s electricity crisis.

“These opportunities enabled me to raise my voice around issues that are important to me,” she said. Through her experience at I-House and with the WIL program, she continues to build confidence and leadership skills, and will no doubt be leading future conversations on improving our world.

The Women’s International Leadership program is made possible by the generosity of Bayer AG.

Meet the 2017 Employment Innovation Fellows

International House Residents of different backgrounds, cultures and disciplines have the unique opportunity to collaborate on ideas that can positively shape our world. This year, I-House challenged Residents to find solutions for stemming youth unemployment in developing countries. Four of the best ideas were awarded fellowships of $10,000 each to activate their plans over the summer. In addition to Mehemed Bougsea, the 2017 Employment Innovation Fellows are:

**Yuvraj Singh (India)** – Currently studying toward his Masters in International Affairs at Columbia University, Yuvraj is focused on fostering youth entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector in Punjab, India. He used his fellowship to work with Farmerce, a local NGO, in planning a mobile app to help young farmers access advice and know-how from experienced farmers and agricultural experts, as well as connect with retailers, wholesale markets and suppliers. To appeal to youth, the platform will integrate gamification, allowing users to earn points redeemable for supplier discounts.

**Anthony Koros (Kenya)** – As a film student at New York University, Anthony knows what young filmmakers want and need, especially in the nascent but fast-growing film and television industry in his native Kenya. He used his fellowship to assemble a seasoned volunteer team of directors and producers from the NYU Tisch Graduate Film Program to provide training and support to aspiring young filmmakers in Nairobi as they create a short film, from production to marketing.

The International House Employment Innovation Fellowships are made possible thanks to the generosity of Stiftung ProEvolution.

In accepting the Rockefeller Award for Distinguished Philanthropic Service on behalf of his company, BNY Mellon Chairman and CEO Gerald Hassell said, “The mission of International House resonates more than ever in the current climate. This organization’s work to promote cross-cultural understanding and foster harmony and respect between people of different cultures and backgrounds is desperately needed. Thank you, International House, for allowing BNY Mellon to be part of that important work.”

Washington Z. SyCip, 96, founder of SGV Group, one of Asia’s largest accounting and consulting firms, was presented with the Edmonds Award for International Understanding. “I stayed at International House when I was first introduced to America, at 18 years of age,” he recalled. “Thank you for inviting me back to be part of this beautiful celebration.”

A special award was presented to Trustee and Alumnus Donald L. Cuneo, who served as I-House President and CEO from 1993 to 2013, for his extraordinary service and commitment. “This award was a complete surprise and I accept it with great appreciation,” Cuneo said, overwhelmed by the standing ovation he received. “I-House has been an important part of my life for so long. Thank you for all the work you continue to do.”

Guests also paid tribute to the recent passing of Trustees David Rockefeller and his niece Abby O’Neill. “David and Abby gave International House almost a century of inspiration and we are deeply grateful for their legacy,” said President and CEO Calvin Sims.

The evening was also highlighted by the introduction of the International House Welcome Fund, which will support Residents whose personal circumstances are adversely affected by on-the-ground realities in their home countries or policy changes in the US or elsewhere.

For more information about the Welcome Fund contact kmiller@ihouse-nyc.org.
Global Chapters

International House is a Global Community - Connect with Us!

NYAAC Welcomes New President Raquel Sumulong '07

“It is a privilege to serve as New York Area Alumni Committee (NYAAC) president and continue to build on the I-House experience, which enriches lives through bonds and friendships made, and the kind of learning that is only possible when other cultures are present. I look forward to our journey together, and developing programs that further inform our role as ambassadors of a global community and reflect I-House’s core values of empathy, respect and moral courage.”

– Raquel Sumulong ’07

For more information on joining NYAAC and upcoming events, email alumni@ihouse-nyc.org

Canadian Friends of International House

An Alumni chapter based in Toronto and serving all of Canada.

For more information email ihousecanada@rogers.com.

Friends of International House, United Kingdom (FIHUK)

An Alumni chapter based in London and serving all of the UK.

• Join us in London at the FIHUK Welcome Reception, Tuesday, October 3, to greet new members of the I-House Alumni community.

• A special thank you to Nicolas Kahale ’80 for his dedication and commitment as a founding Trustee of the I-House FIHUK Chapter. Nicolas is stepping down after many years in his role and we are grateful for his longstanding service.

• Monthly FIHUK Pub Socials are organized by Boyko Boev ’03 every first Tuesday at Parcel Yard inside Kings Cross Station, London.

For more information about FIHUK email jpape@ihouse-nyc.org.

I-House Freunde Pan-European Chapter

This Alumni chapter is based in Germany and serves all of European continent.

• The Germany based chapter recently hosted its annual reunion and meeting in Dresden, Germany, with more than 50 Alumni and friends from across Europe and around the world in attendance. Over $12,000 was raised in support of Freunde Scholarships for I-House Residents and Martin Schneider ’11 was announced as the new Freunde Chapter Treasurer.

• Save the date: the 2018 Freunde Pan-European Alumni Reunion and Annual Meeting will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, September 21-23, 2018.

I-House Freunde is eager to reach more Alumni across Europe.

For more information and to get involved, email Freunde Chapter President Pooja Merchant at Pooja.merchant@gmail.com.
Introducing I-House Alumni Connect!

Join I-House Alumni Connect

An online platform for the International House global alumni community to reunite, reconnect and reminisce.

Register today at: https://ihouse-nyc-alumni.org