

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



HISTORY DEPARTMENT

**WHAT TO
DO WITH
HISTORY**

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*Booklet produced by History Department Staff,
March 2007.*

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to share with you a collection of reflections from graduates of the Harvard History undergraduate program. They write about how their study of history has mattered in their professional life. In a time when the benefits of a liberal arts education are sometimes questioned, these stories serve as both a reminder and an inspiration that history concentrators can pursue a vast array of professions and excel using skills gained from the study of history.

With its emphasis on critical reading skills, the evaluation of evidence, and writing, History's program offers an ideal preparation for professional, business, and scholarly careers. Searching for evidence, exploring patterns within large collections of data, interpreting these patterns and then communicating these interpretations to others is at the core of what people do in many professions, and these are skills taught in the History Department. While most concentrators choose careers in law, business, medicine, and government, each year, a number of History concentrators decide to become professional historians and enter leading graduate programs in the United States and abroad. Moreover, as you can see in these moving statements, long after it ceases to become an academic study, reading history with the keen eye developed in the concentration will provide a lifetime of pleasure.

We thank all of the alumni who have contributed to this booklet, and congratulate them on their accomplishments. To prospective and current concentrators: when you are beyond the gates of Harvard, we hope that you will remember some of the reflections contained herein, and that you too will share how you have forged your own path and connected your study of history to a lifetime of personal and professional successes.

Best wishes,

Professor Sven Beckert

Laird Bell Professor of History

Academia/Education

Melissa May Borja, '04—“At present, I am graduate student in the Ph.D. program in United States history at Columbia University, where I specialize in the study of race, religion, and migration in the twentieth century. Immediately after graduating from Harvard in 2004, I entered graduate school at the University of Chicago, where I earned my M.A., also in U.S. History. In between that and my studies at Columbia, I took a year-long leave of absence to study Arabic, explore the Sahara, and teach 6th grade social studies and 11th grade I.B. history at the Casablanca American School in Morocco. In New York, I continue to teach, this time as a part-time writing instructor for promising high school students in Harlem.

As one who intends to pursue a career in academia, I continue to reap the benefits of having studied history at Harvard every day. My undergraduate coursework introduced me to historical literature that was wide enough in scope to stimulate my curiosity, to expose me to scholarly possibilities, and to educate me in the fundamentals of historical scholarship; yet it was also deep enough in particular subjects to offer a foundation for self-directed research. The tutorial program, in particular, offered an excellent preparation for graduate study. It cultivated sound skills in research, analysis, argumentation, and oral and written communication, and with its emphasis on independent inquiry, it also satisfied my need for work that values creativity and imagination. Last, though certainly not least, the History Department provided a wonderful community in an often overwhelming college environment and introduced me to teachers who have been warm sources of intellectual and personal guidance throughout my years at Harvard and beyond. The legacy of our student-teacher relationship lives on in how I, as a teacher myself, seek to inspire my own students.

There is an obvious connection between my studies as an undergraduate and my work now, but having studied history at Harvard also prepared me for other aspects of my professional life, particularly my work in government and education. Whether I was helping to run a grassroots political campaign or working with public education lobbyists in Washington, DC, skills honed in history tutorial—reading critically, thinking analytically, and communicating effectively—have served me well. As a secondary school teacher both in Morocco and now, part-time, in Harlem, my education at Harvard has guided my

efforts to revise social studies curricula and my approach to teaching the craft of writing. Time and again, the benefits of my undergraduate program become clear.”

Aditi Mehta Doshi, ‘00—“I am currently a teacher at Orthopaedic Hospital Medical Magnet High School in Los Angeles. I teach 10th grade Modern World History, and 11th grade US History. The most important skills which I gained from my time in the History Department were the ability to think critically, and to make connections between different times and themes throughout history. Every day, I call upon my training in critical reading, analysis, writing and the ability to articulate my thoughts orally as I try to inspire the same fascination in my students for history, as many of my tutorials did for me!”

Brodwyn Fischer, ‘91—“I have gone on to become a professor of history! There’s no doubt that the History Department prepared me well for graduate work, and especially for research; the thinking and investigative skills I learned in my tutorials and seminars are still with me years later. History is an excellent way to begin to understand deeply regions of the world outside of the US. Our research generally can’t be done without strong language skills, and our writing generally requires a broad understanding of everything from economics to politics to culture to art. All of these skills have served me very well as an academic, but they are also broadly valuable; I hope your undergraduates will continue think so, too!”

Zevi Gutfreund, ‘01—“I spent the past five years teaching history at independent middle and high schools in Hawaii, San Francisco, and New York City. I am currently a graduate student at UCLA working towards an M.A./Ph.D. in History. I have learned a lot about myself and about education by teaching grades 7-12. In fact, I learned even more about history by teaching students than I learned while writing my thesis. That made me eager to go back to graduate school, where I hope I will continue the pursuit of lifelong learning.”

Chris Kolovos, ‘98—“After graduating, I spent two years working as a strategy consultant. From there, I attended Harvard Law School and served as an editor of the Law Review. After clerking for a year, I switched tracks. I’ve just finished my second year teaching history

at a Boston-area independent school. While I enjoyed law school and consulting, my love for history and teaching won out. It is great to be embarking on a career that lets me foster a love of history in others, in the same way that my high school teachers and college professors sparked my love for the subject.”

Ian McNeely, ‘92—“Harvard provided me with an unrivalled education in history: master’s-level training, in effect, at the undergraduate level, plus socialization in the ways of academia. But on graduating I wanted a greater sense of intellectual community, so I did my Ph.D. at Ann Arbor. Thereafter I returned to Harvard as a member of the Society of Fellows, where I met my wife. Together we now teach in the History Department at the University of Oregon.”

Amelia Noel-Elkins, ‘92—“The majority of my professional career has been spent working in Higher Education. I was an Associate Athletic Director at Indiana University and I currently work as the Director of University College at Illinois State University. In both positions, academic advising is an integral part of my job. One of the most common questions I get from students I advise is: “What can I do with this major?” Many students are very career-oriented and do not see how a liberal arts education can help them advance in their chosen career. My students are amazed that my studies in Medieval/Early Modern English History helped me develop a career in Athletics and in Higher Education. When I entered graduate school to begin studying Higher Education, I was amazed that some of my classmates had never written a paper longer than five pages in college and had never read more than 10-15 pages per week for their classes. Writing a dissertation was less daunting because I had written a thesis in college and I had no problem expressing my opinions in class and, subsequently, at work because I had done it so often in discussion sections of my history classes. The lesson to my students is that it is not so much what I studied in college as the transferable skills I gained from concentrating in History at Harvard.”

Daniel Peppercorn, ‘96—“As a major in American history at Harvard, I was able to improve my writing and learn a lot about human behavior, historical events, sociology, psychology, etc. One of the highlights of my undergraduate experience was writing my senior thesis about the meaning of jazz in the 1920’s. I examined why jazz was

controversial in the early Twenties and discovered what the music meant to black and white college students, adults, and musicians. Currently, I am teaching 8th grade social studies in Westwood, MA, and serving as the social studies curriculum coordinator in the middle school. My course covers units from colonization up through the 1920's and WWII, and I've designed a curriculum that's interactive and engaging. I also have a manager in NYC that's shopping around my humorous coming of age novel."

Anthropology

Christine Folch, '98—"Perhaps one of the most important lessons learned in the history program that has affected how I think was learning how to do archival research and support my findings through historical analysis. Though my current field is cultural anthropology, I find myself utilizing skills and habits I learned as an undergraduate to craft what is, hopefully, a more robust critique of whatever research topic is before me."

Business/Finance

Benjamin Allen, '00—"History is one of those subjects often disparaged by others for its supposed inapplicability, for its esotericism. But I have a life-long love of the subject; it gives me great pleasure, and helps me to put so many of the world's current events into their proper contexts. A history degree offers a strong grounding in research, writing, reading, analyzing, and information dissemination, all of which are valuable skills in the professional world. I also particularly enjoyed the oral defenses we had to make of research projects. The professors pushed me to get to know the subject-matter and think quickly on my feet.

Oliver F. Ames, '43—"I am fascinated that going back 64 years the Harvard History Department has kept track of all the concentrators. Especially because when I entered Harvard in September of 1939 the war clouds were gathering in Europe which encouraged me to enroll in the NROTC unit and the courses in Naval Science became the most important of any that I took. The memories and examples of those great teachers left a lasting impression and something I will always

remember. Of course my career path has taken several twists and turns over the years ranging from active combat Navy service in WWII, a brief stint as an engineering assistant in the General Electric Company, an M.B.A. degree at H.B.S., an officer in the financial department of the John Hancock Insurance Co., four terms in the Massachusetts State Senate, directorships in banks, mutual fund companies, an electric utility and various charitable organizations. Perhaps this grab bag of occupations could be used to show current students that concentrating in history can open up a lot of doors or at least doesn't close many."

Tom Baxter, '92—"I think a background in History provides a great foundation for the sort of analysis of investments and markets we do in the investment management business. There are quite a few elements of the "skill set" that the study of History and the analysis of investments have in common: Finding and cultivating good sources of information representing multiple points of view, studying that information to better understand the relevant issues, identifying the issues and people that have been central to influencing past events, developing a differentiated point of view about how events might play out in the future and supporting that point of view with fact-based analysis, communicating these ideas clearly and with conviction and improving them over time through collaboration and debate with peers."

Frank Beidler, '98—"After graduating and two largely unfulfilling years at Deloitte Consulting in Boston I went to USC film school in Southern California. Three years later, I parted ways with my agent and became involved in a family job working for a timber/investment company. The work has been incredibly rewarding as the nation's forests have become an important battleground in the war for a more sustainable, carbon-neutral future. While at Harvard I concentrated in history and minored in economics. I really enjoyed most of the history courses I took. Historical perspective or, at least, an historical awareness seems to be as useful a lens with which to view the world as any other."

Peter Blacklow, '91—"Being a history major taught me a few things which have helped me in my career. I'll be honest, they are typical liberal arts INDIRECT impacts vs. having been a marketing major at a larger school, but I definitely was taught to: evaluate situations through research, analyze impact through results and make decisions based on

that, write succinctly and compellingly, and communicate effectively.”

John Blondel, ‘78—“I majored in American History with a minor in East Asian. Given my interest in history unearthed in high school and learning from professors, I had an extremely positive experience. I certainly continued to learn to think through more complicated events and understand who we are and where we have come from. I have heard that question before, “Why history?” With some exceptions such as pre-meds, our time at the college was well used to better understand the world, myself and to study what I wanted which gave me pleasure and satisfaction. I later went to Harvard Business School and have worked at Goldman Sachs for 22 years. I have better judgment and am a more content & flexible person for having studied history.”

Tom Claflin, ‘63—“While at Harvard I studied American History (Colonial or Early American History). By the end of June of 1963, less than a month from graduation, I found myself in Hong Kong joining my ship. Upon completion of my Navy tour of duty, I attended the Harvard Business School, graduating in 1967. Since that time I have been engaged in the venture capital field in Boston, initially with other firms, but since 1978 with my own venture firm, Claflin Capital Management. I have never stopped reading or studying history. Having even a partial understanding of historical events as a backdrop to current affairs is so important and so lacking in the United States today. If our leaders in the 1960’s had had the slightest understanding of Asian history, there would have been no Vietnam War. If our leaders today had a minimal understanding of Islamic culture and history, our nation would not be on its current disastrous course of action. If Harvard history students can absorb only the basic tools of the historian’s craft, they will be well equipped to critically evaluate any number of challenging situations they will undoubtedly encounter in any career they choose. History, or perhaps more accurately, the process of historical study, has been so important in my work, which requires making judgments about the future without perfect knowledge.”

Zac Corker, ‘04—“The summer after graduation I had written a letter to the Dean of the College, Benedict Gross, stating my opinion that while providing unparalleled academic opportunities Harvard fell short when it came to issues of campus life and social outlets for undergraduates. I

proposed the creation of a position within the Dean's Office for a recent graduate to work to support these issues and offered to fill this position for one year. To my surprise, the Dean took me up on my offer. I credit my training in History as having given me the skills necessary to reflect upon my years as an undergraduate, to analyze this past experience, to identify what influenced it, and to then write a persuasive document that ended up landing me my first job. I have also currently begun work on a technology start-up based out in Seattle, WA. I serve as the COO and Vice President of Sales and Marketing for the company."

Francis de la Cruz, '01—"After five years on Wall Street working for two of the largest investment banks in the world (Morgan Stanley & UBS), I have found that communication skills are absolutely essential to success in a career in finance. I would argue that one's ability to write, compose, and edit well is more important than one's ability to create a spreadsheet or perform quantitative-oriented tasks. So far in my career, my communication skills have definitely set me apart from my peers. Nearly all business problems I have faced were discussed, debated, and ultimately solved either over e-mail or through more formal correspondence (especially with clients), and it was my ability to present well-formed arguments and logical solutions that frequently won me praise from firm management. In this respect, the training I received from the Harvard History Department prepared me EXTREMELY well for my professional life. My advice to anyone who is not sure what they can do with a Harvard History degree - Anything they want. It's really true!"

Georges de Menil, '62—"After studying History, I went on to become an economist. Tom Skidmore was very helpful in that transition. The historical perspective remains important."

John Donahue, '93—"After graduating from Harvard with a History degree, I immediately began working in the business world first as a commercial lender at Bank of Boston, then as an investment banker at Robertson Stephens, and now as a Director at a private equity firm named Windjammer Capital. What my history major has provided is a solid ability to conduct research and synthesize extensive amounts of information into a concise, useable format. I find that some of my colleagues with an economics/mathematics background can generate

solid analytical work, but often times have trouble communicating this work in both written and verbal fashion. Long story short, a history degree provides one with a very solid research, writing and communication background that is valuable in any profession. You can always learn the analytical/financial aspects on the job, but it is not as easy to teach oneself how to conduct fundamental research and how to communicate that research effectively.”

William H. FitzGerald, '06—“History provides an excellent background in analysis and writing. The ability to analyze complex situations and to articulate a thoughtful opinion is very helpful - if not essential - for financial analysts conducting fundamental research in the equity, fixed income, and alternative asset classes. Combined with a couple of basic economics and accounting classes, the History concentration prepares students well for most exciting opportunities available in finance.”

Martin Fridson, '74—“After receiving my BA in History, I went on to Harvard Business School where I developed a particular interest in finance. This path led to a career on Wall Street that involved corporate bond trading and later securities analysis. I found that most investment research lacked a historical dimension. Both individual securities and entire sectors of the financial markets periodically went to extreme valuations under conditions that, judging by historical precedents, were almost certain not to persist. My training in history made it natural for me to recognize analogies with episodes of previous periods, but it was unusual for market commentators to have such a perspective. Awareness of history distinguished my work from other research and was instrumental in gaining me a top ranking in a prominent survey of institutional investors. Historical analysis has also been central to several books I have written about financial markets and economics. I still love history for its own sake, but I have also benefited in very tangible ways from studying it.”

Jay Glaubach, '97—“Above all, my history degree taught me how to think critically. My classes and thesis challenged me to form hypotheses about cause and effect, and to research those hypotheses and construct arguments in their defense. A history degree is great training for law or fields which require the same skills. Writing skills are increasingly rare in

the workplace, and I'm grateful that my advisor at Harvard encouraged me to write a thesis. Finally, people get tired of working with finance, accounting and economics majors. Offering a different perspectives and bringing a different set of interests to the table can help distinguish one in an interview or business meeting."

Dana Hansen, '01—"My history concentration has not factored into my professional life, but I enjoyed my time at Harvard and my classes in history very much!"

Steve Hely, '02—"The study of history exposed me to centuries of human folly and irony. This helped shape my comedic sensibility."

Franklin Hobbs, '69—"After Harvard History, I went on to Harvard Business School and then into investment banking. I was the CEO of two investment banks during my career and now am involved in private equity. My training in history has been very helpful to my business career as I learned how to assess facts from many sources, how to distill what I found to readable sentences and most importantly that history really does matter whether it is the history of a country, a company or an industry. Much can be learned from the past and majoring in history at Harvard gave me some great tools to bring to a business career. The finance and accounting can all be absorbed later — the ability to bring critical reasoning to a set of disparate facts has been for me invaluable."

Nicholas Hodler, '05—"Especially in Europe, many wonder how and why someone with a History background would be doing a management training program in a large multinational chemical company producing flavors and fragrances. As with so many jobs, the technical skills are learnt on-the-job. I feel that I am not at any disadvantage, and that on the contrary, many envy my background. One of the most important skills I learned as a History concentrator is how to deal with vast amounts of information. It is usually impossible to read everything you want to for most papers and research projects. I learned to look for the essential elements in a wide range of sources, something extremely important in almost any business."

Jason Hollinger, '97—"History was my chance to continue to study a wide range of topics that I was fascinated by. As I did look to the real

world as a senior, I admit, I panicked slightly. Even though I took care each summer to get an internship in a potential future profession, I still really didn't know what I wanted to do. After all, what did the study of history really set me up to do? I didn't want to teach and Law school wasn't my angle either. As I began to think about what the discipline of studying history did provide, I realized that the skills I learned were applicable in a much broader context. I could think critically, write well, and I was able to articulate my thoughts in an organized and logical manner. These are, in my opinion, the most important skills you could ever learn for work in the business world. I ended up in investment banking at Morgan Stanley for two years with an eye towards becoming a "business professional". After Morgan Stanley, I moved west to work for Charles Schwab in a business strategy roll. From there I moved into a technology business unit and worked on my general management skills. After four years out west, I returned to Harvard to earn my MBA which I successfully completed last year. I recommend this experience to all that have the opportunity. It is an incredible personal luxury to take two years to examine your goals and priorities for the workplace. I currently work for Trammell Crow Company as a real estate developer. I source deals and work on any number of different aspects of a real estate transaction. The work is stimulating and diverse. In many respects it reminds me of the variety that I was able to afford myself as an undergrad."

Mark Hunter, '97—"I am currently a Vice President in a research firm working with retailers and restaurants. I use the skills I developed as a history concentrator everyday. I am constantly sifting through information trying to develop a cohesive argument that will persuade my clients to take some action to make their business better. Developing credible business presentations utilizes virtually the same set of skills as writing a paper in college. Being able to quickly sort through facts to find what's relevant and communicate your stance effectively are skills that you will use regardless of where your career will take you."

Wendy Kennish, '91—"After graduation, I spent five years in publishing - first at a health and wellness magazine and then as an assistant editor at Harlequin Enterprises, which prompted my desire to return to school. I completed a dual law degree program graduating in 1999 with law degrees from schools in Canada (University of Windsor) and the United States (University of Detroit Mercy). I have been working

as a corporate securities lawyer for the past seven years at a large law firm, Torys LLP, in Toronto, Ontario, where I work primarily raising money for our clients in the equity capital markets. The training in history I received at Harvard has been particularly valuable in both my experiences in publishing and in law. Both fields require a great deal of reading, writing and synthesis of material as well as editing for content - the amount of reading, discussion of the material and writing that was required in the History Department gave me tremendous skills that I still draw on to this day - the ability to analyze and distill important facts and the ability to write in a clear and concise manner, to name just a few.”

Hersch Langenthal, ‘50—““Those who do not study history are bound to repeat it.” In any event the study of history puts the world in perspective. One learns that constant change is the order of the universe and that one should embrace change rather than resist it. From the past, one can learn to discriminate and discern among the choices and changes. History is the platform from which one can better assess the present and help plot a course for the future. No matter which field of endeavor you ultimately choose the study of History will provide a firm grounding.”

Frank Leonard, ‘01—“I worked in software/tech services venture capital for two years after graduating. I then took one year off and went to the London School of Economics for an M.A. in History of International Relations. Upon my return to the States, I went back in to venture capital and I currently work as an associate at a medical device focused fund. Venture investing is a lot like writing a history paper. Venture capital success requires diligent research, clear writing, and the ability to distill a million facts into a single, coherent presentation. My history training helped significantly in my professional career.”

James Marett, ‘03—“I currently am involved with history as an area of interest that is merely tangential to my career; I work as a business analyst in the internal consulting group of a major investment firm. While the ability to analyze cultural exchange between colonists and Native Americans during the 1700’s is now irrelevant to my job, the ability quickly to absorb and understand information (be it the life insurance industry, mutual fund industry, or other areas equally foreign

to most undergrads) is central to my career. The ability to write clearly sets me apart from most people I encounter. Don't let anyone tell you that a history major is useless - the skills it teaches in the above areas are invaluable in business. Good luck in your studies, enjoy the opportunity to read and learn whatever it is that you choose, and I'll see those of you who choose it in the business world."

Joshua Marks, '97—"I concentrated in history with a focus on contemporary, post-colonial African affairs, specifically the apartheid era of South Africa and its regional impact. The degree gave me a broad perspective on contemporary African events with the additional background of colonial European history. After my history degree, I earned an MBA from HBS. An undergraduate concentration in history provided research and analytical skills essential in that competitive environment. Since then my career has taken me to the technology and transportation industries. In both the perspective gained from a history degree has been helpful in identifying opportunities, interacting with different cultures and understanding modern governments in both Europe and Africa."

Barbara Martinez, '00—"While I have not yet settled on my ultimate career, my Harvard history education gave me the fundamental writing and investigation skills that have allowed for a careening and fulfilling six-year journey through business, journalism, law, and now back to academics. The common thread in each of my jobs has been the need to write clearly, quickly, and accurately. The History Department tutorials were invaluable in preparing me for these demands. I am currently applying for graduate programs beginning in fall 2007."

Sarah McAuley, '01—"Being a history major at one of the best universities in the world teaches you to be a creatively analytical thinker; an articulate presenter of theory, speculation and fact; as well as a persuasive writer. With these three skills in your arsenal, you're well equipped to do a wide array of jobs. Directly out of school, I accepted a position at a public relations agency working with the country's leading technology companies where I was ultimately promoted to Senior Account Executive. Subsequently, I accepted a position as the Communications Manager for Sonus Networks where I oversee global public relations and employee communications initiatives, with

supporting roles in investor relations, branding and marketing. It may not appear to be a direct fit to my degree in Modern European History, but as a history major, I was trained to identify themes and present arguments. Today, my job consists of identifying and formulating key messages and tailoring them to specific audiences to help them better understand our business.”

Joseph McGeehin, ‘06—“It is evident that a certain skill set developed as a history concentrator can be invaluable in any capacity—specifically, this is the ability to communicate and argue effectively and eloquently. My training in history has exponentially improved my written and oral communication. History is a discipline that in many regards must be self-taught, which is to say that the onus is on the student to acquaint him/her self with a text and formulate an interpretation. So far this has mattered very much - knowing the process of teaching oneself can be translated to any discipline, from medieval history to mergers & acquisitions. I value the education I received in the department and I trust that the themes to which I’ve spoken will only become more apparent in the coming years.”

Svetlana Meyerzon, ‘05—“Concentrating in History is a great way to polish your research and writing skills. Writing my history thesis was one of the most exciting projects I have worked on, taking me to Moscow, Russia. I believe my thesis research prepared me for law school by teaching me to pay attention to detail, to organize a research project, and to write effectively.”

Alison Miller, ‘05—“I am very happy I chose history as a concentration for many reasons. One of the most important is that my training in history taught me how to make convincing arguments. I have found that my ability to build a cohesive argument quickly and effectively has helped me to make my ideas stand out in a professional environment. I’ve also been able to apply my communication and writing skills. As a history concentrator, it was important to be able to express complex concepts clearly, and that has been crucial at work. Finally, history requires a constant effort to look at things from a different point of view. At Harvard, I was challenged to bring new perspectives to familiar topics. The ability to approach challenges from a new perspective is always important at a company like Google, where everything is constantly

changing and fresh points of view are crucial.”

Andrew Miller, ‘04—“I currently work on safety and quality audits of NASA programs, projects, and facilities. On the surface, this is not a typical job one would expect a history concentrator to have. However, I have found my history training very valuable in that it helps structure how I view, analyze, and aggregate the data I collect on an audit to turn it into a report that tells a convincing—and credible—story about the current conditions at the audited facility. Whereas many engineers and auditors are focused on the details, my training has allowed me to drill-down into details while maintaining a broad view—being able to see both the forest and the trees, as it were. I now manage all of the programmatic audits conducted by NASA HQ, and I credit my undergraduate training with giving me the skills necessary to succeed in this position.”

Stephanie Minnella, ‘98—“Despite ending up in a technical field, my training in history at Harvard has been a huge benefit in my professional life. Most valuable is my experience evaluating source materials, forming my own opinion, and being able to clearly and persuasively present my point of view on paper. These skills are useful no matter what profession you choose, and they really set you apart from your professional peers. It is unbelievably rare to find technical people who can communicate their ideas clearly when they write. At least where I work, people who do these things well have an edge when it comes to hiring, raises, bonuses, and promotions.”

Thomas Moore, ‘98—“I am currently a second-year Associate in Morgan Stanley’s Fixed Income Division, where I work as a credit analyst in the high yield bond group. I conduct securities research which forms the basis for investment decisions by our trading group as well as for clients. While I now focus on economic data and corporate SEC filings, rather than medieval documents and Renaissance philosophy, I use many of the skills I developed as a history concentrator at Harvard. In particular, I believe the skeptical, questioning mindset fostered by an education in history is valuable in all aspects of finance. Furthermore, the ability to write well and concisely is as important as it is unusual in the world of business.”

Omar Nazem, ‘01—“Studying history at Harvard helped my business

career by teaching me how to organize my thoughts, how to communicate clearly in writing, and how to analyze disparate data. Often in business it is necessary to tell a story using disorganized and contradictory material; knowing how to analyze large sums of information and to find a meaningful argument in the material is an important skill. I've also found the ability to quickly read and summarize large amounts of written material to be helpful."

David Nelson, '98—"After graduating from Harvard, I went into investment banking and later on to business school. In my current role at H&R Block, I evaluate growth opportunities for our company in international markets. I chose History as a concentration because I believed that understanding the past was central to being an educated person. However, I am also confident that my background as a History student has been a distinct advantage in my career. By studying History, you can gain the ability to efficiently work through large amounts of information, formulate an argument, and successfully defend that position with fact and precedent. Business people use those types of analytical skills and thought processes every day."

Suzanne Nossel, '91—"I majored in history at Harvard and have always been interested in politics and international affairs. Right after college I spent two years in Johannesburg, South Africa working to address political violence in the townships during the country's transition to democracy and then went to law school. While there I published a book on life for women in large law firms. After graduating, I clerked and then did a public interest litigation fellowship for a year. I decided I did not foresee a long-term career in the law, and left to become a management consultant. From there, I joined the US Mission to the UN as Deputy to the Ambassador for UN Management and Reform, a political post. When our term in office ended, I returned to the private sector, becoming Vice President of Business Development and Strategy at Bertelsmann, and then VP of Strategy and Operations at Dow Jones, where I am now. I am still interested in writing and in politics. Through an affiliation with a think tank I have a blog, www.democracyarsenal.org and write articles on foreign policy topics. My interest in history was sparked by some memorable high school history teachers. My training at Harvard helped me improve my writing and analytical skills, and gain a foundation of knowledge that's been useful for everything I've

done since.”

Christopher Nyweide, ‘02—“After graduating with a history degree, I went into investment banking and then into private equity two years later. My history degree aided me in these finance positions because the discipline taught me: critical thinking skills, excellent writing skills, and primary research skills. In evaluating businesses and industries, it is necessary to constantly use all three of these skills. I also found that during interviews a history degree helped to differentiate me as a candidate from other more mainstream finance-specific candidates coming out of undergrad. Additionally, it does not hurt to have ‘cocktail party knowledge’ about WWII or the Cold War to use in different social/business situations.”

Matt O’Hare, ‘01—“I don’t do much writing with the job, but thorough research, analysis, and the crafting and couching of an investment thesis is fairly similar to creating theses and arguments for history papers.”

David Regan, ‘99—“Since graduation, I’ve been working at JPMorgan Private Bank in an investment role for high net worth individuals. Concentrating in History was helpful to my career in a few key ways. The tutorial programs taught me to think critically (understand biases in different arguments), research diligently and construct arguments. I think a concentration in history provides a very strong foundation for a number of careers, including finance.”

Kimika Sergeant, ‘02—“Currently, I work in a consumer research position in which I am responsible for helping the marketing department at my company. I am designing, implementing and analyzing research projects such as focus groups and telephone research to help marketing with key business decisions. My training in history at Harvard helped me with identifying patterns and trends: a key task in my job. In my role, I am responsible for culling through data from multiple sources and identifying the insights. With the many research papers I had to write as a history major at Harvard, I feel extremely prepared and have been able to excel at my job.”

Amina Runyan-Shefa, ‘98—“I have been a strategy consultant, a talent manager’s assistant, a feature film producer’s assistant, an

associate brand manager at a consumer products company, and now a marketing associate at a TV/entertainment conglomerate. Being a history major taught me how to research and analyze diverse sets of information and data in order to diagnose the key drivers of a current situation, a skill that has been necessary in every job that I've held. And if current students don't buy that, how about this: Being a history major was extremely important when I was researching a historical script for an Academy Award-winning director."

Scott Simpson, '98—"From graduation until 2006, I worked at venture capital firms focused on investing in early-stage technology companies. My training in history at Harvard provided me with capabilities of analysis, argumentation, and written expression that served me well in that field. I am planning to begin law school this fall, where I know that my experience and training as a history concentrator will help me achieve success."

Roger Smith, '66—"On my very first job interview for a position as a research analyst on Wall Street—while still an undergraduate—I was asked what my major at Harvard had been. With certain trepidation, I answered "Modern European History." The head of the research department said, "Mine was Medieval History. You're hired." Since then, as an investment analyst, as a corporate executive in the movie industry, as a writer about the entertainment industry, and now as a consultant to film and media companies, I am constantly usefully applying the broadened perspective that my study of history gave me. But much more important, it has formed the core of my interests and helped me become a person with a deep sense of involvement in politics and the world around me. I chose History as an undergraduate major because it seemed to me that EVERYTHING else—literature, art, economics, sociology—was in some sense a sub-set of history. In the forty years since I graduated, I have had no reason to change that belief."

Jim Stanton, '67—"The most important contributor to my intellectual development was my junior year tutorial with Professor Erich Gruen. Each week, we were challenged to critically research and evaluate complex data from a range of sources and to refine that information into our own view of a point of historical debate. To then have to defend that view individually with a great teacher and expert in the field made

Harvard Business School feel like a snap.”

Robert Strassler, ‘59—“I attended the Harvard Business School after graduating, which I found a fascinating complement to my previous study of History. I would like to acknowledge a debt to the History Department of Harvard University, which in 1958, when I was an undergraduate, set up a special tutorial course for me in ancient history. The man who tutored me, George Nadel, provided the stimulus and the scholarly background that I believe made it possible for me to return to ancient history some thirty years later, after a career in business.

I could give many examples of how my background in the study of history assisted me in my business career. From 1963 to 1983 I managed a small company in Coffeyville Kansas which produced products for the oil-field equipment industry. My knowledge and understanding of history was crucial to my ability to manage the company through a wild boom from 1972 to 1982 and the bust of 1983. Many in our company and in the industry suffered such shock from the abruptness with which boom had turned to bust, and with which their anticipation of sustained upward growth had been shattered, that it took them many years, and often a change of occupation, in order to recover. Although I was surprised and even astonished by the swiftness of the bust, I was mentally prepared for it in general, and found myself in a very good position financially to weather the storm. To make a long story short, I managed the company down to below its pre-boom size but achieved break-even results even in the worst moments. Then I, too left for greener pastures, in my case to some investment managing and, finally, to editing editions of ancient historians.”

Van Taylor, ‘96—““If it happened it is history.” “To know the future, study the past.” History helped me in business, war and politics. The Harvard History Department trained me to think critically, analyze information, and apply it for a synthesized answer to complex problems. As a Marine in combat, McKinsey consultant, and candidate for US Congress the academic background of a history concentrator helped me to succeed. I highly recommend concentrating in History no matter what your future ambitions.”

Bonni (Grant) Theriault, ‘92—“My training in history helped me with critical analysis and writing, both of which are very valuable in

business.”

Marty Thiry, ‘00—“I am a graduate student, pursuing my M.A. and hopefully Ph.D. at the East West Center and the University of Hawaii. For some years before that I was a police officer with the New Orleans Police Department. I found my training in history to be particularly useful as a patrol officer and even more so as a robbery detective. Arguing on the stand actually reminded me of defending some of my tutorial papers and I am grateful for the early exposure.”

Gayle Turk, ‘94—“I am currently a Vice President at a boutique investment banking and advisory firm in New York called Evercore Partners. Prior to being a banker, I was a consultant with McKinsey & Company, Inc., also in New York. I am often asked how a history major ends up in business, as I only took one economics course in my time at Harvard. I studied what I loved (history) and the experience taught me several things. First, history teaches you to be a good and fast writer. I find it very easy to compose my thoughts in words given all the practice writing papers. History also teaches you to be a critical thinker. And finally, history gives you the capability to handle complex tasks and juggle multiple responsibilities, something that a business person needs to do every day. I am so glad I studied history and then learned business skills later, through my jobs, and through business skill. History is a great way to get a solid liberal arts education in your college years which really serves you well no matter what you do.”

Robert Ulin, ‘43— “The skills that I acquired while studying History at Harvard have helped with my graduate business studies and business career. We were taught perspective on events in our time vs. the past, and in other places. It developed my ability to review large amounts of written material, to select relevant facts, and draw reasonable conclusions. It also provided me with the skills needed in written presentation (which history enforced at a high standard to receive honors). Remembering important names, dates, and places was a habit I found very useful in business.”

Hannah Vazzana, ‘06—“History matters. It matters for me on an intellectual level as well as a practical one. After college, I embarked on a career in business, working in a management training program

at Sears. The ability to think analytically as well as craft an argument is a distinct skill, especially when interviewing in the competitive business environment. I remember my many hours in the archives throughout Harvard striving to find original stories to tell and back up with evidence. In business, we look to the past often to see our mistakes, learn from them and best of all to innovate in the future. Even though I did not formally study accounting, finance or economics, through the study of history I inherently picked up the forces all of these have played, especially in American history. Having studied history instead of say, accounting, made me well rounded and interesting to recruiters at companies. It was a natural starting point for conversations. I stood out in the crowd of business undergrads. After Sears, I went to Harvard Business School. There, study of the history of business is a requirement, thus further reinforcing my own choice in undergraduate concentration. I am now a Director of Project Leadership with Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide. I continue to fall back on my core set of tools from undergrad—the ability to communicate in writing clearly and succinctly; the ability to craft an argument based on solid data mining from a variety of sources; and a keen interest in people and their stories. Business much like history is about people and their stories. I am a true believer in the liberal arts education. You can make your own choices and use your skills in any way to follow your particular interests in life.”

David Villarreal, ‘05—“My training at Harvard, as a History Concentrator in Latin American History, allowed me to specialize as a private wealth manager in the Latin American population (i.e. Mexican-Americans, Latinos, Latin Americans). When I first entered the financial advising career, I interviewed at a number of firms, at which I was able to hold a frank and in-depth conversation about the region’s collective cultural history, immigrant history, and educational history of Latinos, all of which has now allowed me to relate strongly with clients and to build a business truly international in nature.”

Brian Wannop, ‘05—“I had many of the same concerns when I was choosing a concentration at the beginning of my college years, but in the end I am very glad I chose history because even if the information you learn is not all that relevant for your future career, the skills you learn will be extremely relevant. For example, the type of work I currently

do deals with synthesizing past company and market information to predict what is going to happen in the future and help companies best prepare for it. The research, writing, structuring of an argument, and presentation skills I learned as a history major I use everyday in my current position. A history degree will teach you how to approach a large volume of information and summarize it into a concise, water-proof argument that can be confidently defended from any angle. It doesn't matter whether it's standing up in section of History 10a to voice an opinion or standing up in front of a CEO during a presentation and telling him what he should do with his business—the skills will transfer.”

Thomas Ward, '75—“When I was an undergraduate, I more or less assumed that I would pursue an academic career. I was lucky enough to work as a researcher for Prof. Harry Hanham for over 4 years. We had many discussions that led me to believe that I could use my training as an historian in business. Without much advance thought, I plunged into management consulting and have had good success over 30 years of work. I often analyze problems with historical tools and have found that many clients lack a good understanding of their own business history. Clients seem to like my historical perspective. As an executive at Campbell Soup once said, “You're the only one around here who bothers to remember the mistakes we've made in the past and tries to keep us from making them again.”

Jed Willard, '96—“Every now and then over the decade since I graduated in History from Harvard, potential employers have asked me why on earth I chose to major in such a useless field. What a simple way to know immediately NOT to work for that employer! The most useful benefit is the reason why those unfortunate managers are so wrong. More than ever before in history, governments, corporations, educational institutions, and the community at large need managers and professionals who possess a broad understanding of our interconnected world. As Globalization progresses the demand for broad temporal and geographic perspectives will only continue to grow. Given that finance, trade, technology, and information now move relatively freely across national borders, any aspiring professional with an interest in media, finance, law, advocacy, government, or international organizations must have the ability to understand and interpret data and issues on a global

level. And understanding and interpreting data and issues over a diverse range of cultures and sources is what History concentrators learn to do. The skills you acquire as a History concentrator are sorely needed by governments, multinational corporations, and global NGOs: sensitivity, perspective, insight; along with maturity and a capacity for risk-taking, are exactly the skills that every major organization is looking for at the managerial level – in every sector. Organizations which do not understand this, like the ones I have sometimes interviewed with, will fail in this new world. Successful History concentrators will succeed.”

Ryan Westendorf, ‘96—“I remember the day that I told my parents that I wanted to major in History. My father frowned and said, “I thought that you wanted to go into business. Does this mean that you changed your mind and now want to become a teacher?” My father, along with countless others over the last 10 years, assumed that teaching was the only profession that History concentrators chose. I never had any intention of pursuing academia. I chose History as my concentration based on the simple fact that I enjoyed learning about history. I knew from experience that history classes incorporated several important life skills that translate well into the business world. Most importantly, I learned to analyze and research information and create concise, articulate responses using both the spoken and the written word. In addition, I learned to collaborate with other students and tolerate and accept that other people can utilize the same source material and reach different opinions than me. These two concepts make up the foundation of my professional life. My job today takes me all over the world where I continue to utilize the skills that my History classes at Harvard taught me. From Seoul to Singapore and Mumbai to Munich, my travels have taught me that one cannot over-emphasize the need to learn about cultures and how past events helped shape the modern world. In an increasingly competitive world where everyone is looking for an edge, I find that searching for clues in past events directly influence decisions that I make everyday.”

Jeffrey Wood, ‘93—“I believe that my History degree has given me a huge leg up in the world of business. The skills required of the concentration have served me extremely well. I currently work as Director, Strategic Distribution, for Prudential Financial. In this capacity, I work to identify opportunities for creating relationships that can help lead

to the growth of Prudential. Though Prudential is a large company, I work for a small group, and have the opportunity to be involved in every aspect of what we do, from identifying the opportunity, to completing a risk analysis, to working with legal to create a compliant program, and finally implementing with our field force.

I can trace my path to this position directly to my second job out of college, where I worked for a research/consulting firm for the financial services industry. The position required extensive qualitative analysis and writing. Though the outsider may have looked and intuitively thought that a business degree would be most useful, I was hired specifically because of my degree in history (combined with work experience from first job). At one point we realized that our entire team at that company was made up only of English and History majors. I'm not sure it had been planned that way, but it became clear that individuals with those types of degrees were most suited to our work. I believe that my liberal arts degree, and particularly my History degree, helped to develop skills that have given me a distinct advantage."

Ruth Yang, '91—"When I began my major in history, I had every intention of becoming an academic. Much to my family's dismay, my future earning potential was not on my agenda. Once I graduated, however, the pressures of paying the rent and making car payments jolted me into my current career in finance. Over the past 15 years, my background in history has proven to be an invaluable cornerstone to my career and professional achievements. History provided me two invaluable tools: the ability to problem solve and strong writing skills. The years of writing research papers helped to build my writing skills, giving me a distinct advantage over the years as I have built a career in financial research. There is no doubt that my degree from Harvard has opened many doors for me over the years. However, the skills I gained there have unquestionably helped me to take advantage of the opportunities provided by that gained entree."

Continuing Education in History

Liora Halperin, '05—"I am using my History degree quite directly—I am a second year graduate student in the History Ph.D. program at UCLA in the Jewish History and Middle Eastern history fields. Entering

the History Department program as a sophomore I had no idea that I would be headed for a career as a professor of history—I was simply interested in a certain period and place and wanted to learn more. As I went through the tutorial sequence in the department I became increasingly convinced that I wanted to apply the sorts of tools I was learning as part of a career. The Harvard tutorial program is simply unparalleled. I learned how to search for and carefully read primary documents—newspaper articles, letters, and reports—to learn about how scholars debate historical phenomena in books, and to think critically about how a document can be understood in reference to larger political, intellectual or cultural trends. It has been fascinating to try to understand how and why historical actors act the way they do, how scholars write about history, and how humans make records of their own lives. In the process, I made contacts with professors and graduate students, and of course with fellow students, that remain important to me. As I proceed through graduate school, I am increasingly thankful for the experience I had in the Harvard History Department.”

Adrian Lentz-Smith, '96—“My undergraduate concentration had a direct bearing on my professional life: two years after I graduated from college, I entered a graduate history program. I received my doctorate in U.S. History from Yale in 2005, have finished one year of a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at UNC, and am completing a book on African-American politics during the era of World War I. Even more than the academic training that I received at Harvard, I am grateful for the mentorship I received from my tutorial leader and teaching fellow. Without them, I would never have thought of myself as an historian or writer.”

Shoshana Lew, '05—“I’ll be starting a Ph.D. program this fall in American History at Northwestern University, where I’ll be working on early American history with T.H. Breen. My experience in the History Department was truly foundational, and undoubtedly guided me toward the career path that I have chosen. The faculty members with whom I worked closely (professors Ulrich and Chaplin in particular) were unbelievably generous with their time and energy, and continue to serve as important mentors and role models.”

Noah McCormack, '04—“Since I have gone on to get a Ph.D. in

history, my training in the department as an undergrad has had a more than usual relevance to my professional life. Even if I had taken another career path, I know the analytical abilities which are the foundation of history would have served me very well indeed.”

Costume Design

Elizabeth Cullum Helfrich, '02—“My undergraduate studies in history at Harvard gave me lots of skills that I have used in my professional life. As a professional costume designer, I have to be able to do extensive research quickly and effectively. Because of my Harvard training, I know where to look, what to look for, and how to evaluate historical sources for accuracy and relevance. Additionally, my training in the History Department provided me with the kinds of organizational and time management skills that would be useful in any profession.”

Government/Politics

Robert—“As an analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency, I use daily the research and writing skills that I learned as a History concentrator. While the CIA is non-political and does not make foreign policy, our analysis of intelligence on overseas developments informs critical decisions by the most senior US policymakers: the President and his advisers, the Cabinet secretaries, our military commanders, and the Cabinet departments. The core skills of my profession are those of an historian: to read and comprehend large volumes of information; to reach well-reasoned conclusions firmly grounded in the evidence while dealing with sometimes maddeningly incomplete knowledge; and to write clear and concise prose presenting my findings. The difference is that I apply my skills not to past events but to the most urgent present problems facing US foreign policy. It is not surprising, then, that historians—including not a few from Harvard—are well-represented among CIA analysts.”

Jonas Peter Akins, '01—“After a summer spent driving taxis on Martha’s Vineyard (my tips seemed to be better when I included some historical tidbits along the journey) I taught history for two years at

Sedbergh School in Cumbria, England. There I taught 20th Century World History, English History 1066-1815, and the American Civil War. In each case my Harvard background was great preparation. Not only for the salient points of the material in question, but especially for the ability to distill large quantities of material and then deliver that the next day. It was, in some cases, like writing a response paper for each lesson plan. The focus in England on rote memorization was different than Harvard, but the analytic focus on “so what?” was present in both environments.

After coming back to Boston I decided to join the Navy. While waiting for OCS I worked for Charles River Associates, in a group that supports shareholder fraud litigation. It was fascinating to work in a world of economists and introduce a few useful historical tools into the reading of analyst reports from Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley in the heady days of the internet boom.

I'm now an intelligence officer in the Navy. I use my reading skills everyday, although my writing skills are not as readily used. Some of my work in early 20th century history has also been useful in understanding the roots of some of the problems we face in the 'Global War on Terror.' Not tactically significant, but realizing why the lines ended up on the maps where they did does help to explain some of the strife.”

Brian Gibel, '95—“Through countless essay assignments, I learned how to write effectively and convincingly. Through interactive seminar classes, I learned how to argue and defend a point of view. Through reading hundreds of books I learned to see and respect the simultaneous existence of different opinions. These are the most important skills I use on a daily basis as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer.”

Geoffrey Harriman, '01—“The research and written argumentation skills emphasized during my years in Harvard's History Department have been very valuable to me both in my professional career on Capitol Hill and in my subsequent legal training. Life as a Congressional staffer was considerably easier for those who were capable of assimilating, organizing, and evaluating often-contradictory documents. Law school and the practice of law in general, are very much centered on the written word. Associates writing memoranda in law firms of all sizes, solo practitioners who draft contracts, wills, and deeds, trial attorneys

drafting motions for judges, legal scholars who try to publish in law reviews and nearly all other types of lawyers in between make their living by reading, analyzing and, above all, writing clear, succinct, well-grounded prose. The History Department's tutorial program focused on these skills in a way that many departments do not. Its extreme emphasis on producing 'something unique that no one anywhere has ever written about before' is useful principally in ivory-tower contexts, but the skills imparted in order to do this are nevertheless of great value."

David Joffe, '00—"I have been teaching history since graduating college. My degree from Harvard prepared me not just by providing a deep knowledge in subject matter but also in the tools of history which a teacher must pass on to his/her students. I have also worked in the political field on campaigns and for a councilmember from the city of New York. Although many feel history is an impractical degree, the study of history, particularly of politics, governments and mass movements provides a wealth of knowledge from which one can use to create political policy."

Halbert Jones, '99—"It's safe to say that I wouldn't be where I am today if I had not chosen to concentrate in history as an undergraduate. The writing and analytical skills and the expertise as a Latin Americanist that I developed as a history concentrator at Harvard enabled me to take a position as an assistant to Costa Rican Nobel laureate Oscar Arias during my first year after graduation. I then undertook graduate-level studies in Latin American history, traveling to Washington and Mexico City to research the consolidation of Mexico's single-party regime during World War II. Upon the completion of my doctorate, I took a job as a staff historian in the Office of the Historian of the State Department. There I have access to many fascinating sources on the making of US foreign policy, and I am involved in the compilation of the official history of the United States' international relations. To be sure, the study of history can open the door to rewarding careers in many fields, but it's worth noting, too, that there are many exciting professional opportunities in the field of history."

Sarah Kline, '92—"Being a history concentrator at Harvard taught me to read and think critically. Every writer has an agenda, whether she is writing a history book or a position paper on a current legislative

issue. Harvard taught me not to take things at face value, but to make my own decisions, based on as wide a variety of sources and perspectives as I can find. This is crucial to making responsible recommendations to members of the U.S. Senate, and it is something I first learned in my sophomore history tutorial at Lowell House.”

Theodore Leary, ‘66—“My love of history, particularly American history, led me to law school and thereafter to a job as a Legislative Assistant for a U.S. Senator. In my late 20’s I was promoted to Chief of Staff and helped run his re-election campaign in 1974. Knowing and understanding American history was crucial, both to understanding what the issues were that my Senator faced, but also how to communicate to the public through speeches and articles. I moved on from politics to the institutional real estate investment and ‘workout’ business. It’s hard to say that my history concentration at Harvard had a direct impact on that portion of my career, but I do feel that my enthusiasm for biographies of leaders helped me become a better leader and problem solver in the business world. I have hired a lot of young men and women in my long career and I must admit I have a preference for people with a liberal arts undergraduate degree such as history.”

Roman Martinez, ‘01—“After graduating from Harvard, I earned an M.Phil in International Relations at Cambridge University. I began work at the Pentagon, in the unit within the Office of the Secretary of Defense responsible for Iraq policy. Following the war, I joined the staff of the Governance Team of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, Iraq, where I worked on the political transition process. From June 2004 through July 2005, I served as Director for Iraq at the National Security Council staff at the White House. I then returned to Baghdad to advise the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq on the ongoing Iraqi constitutional process. I then began my studies at Yale Law School.”

Evan A. North, ‘05—“I am currently working as the Research Director for Winning Connections, a political consulting firm on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. As the Research Director, I supervise a staff of two and help develop voter contact programs for progressive interest groups and political candidates. Our team also tracks about 75 statewide and federal races on a daily basis, and puts out a daily news report to help keep the rest of the office informed. There is no doubt that my Harvard

History degree prepared me well for a job in research! It has been a very interesting experience so far, and I have been learning a ton.”

Ellen Schneider, ‘01—“I was an undergraduate history major at Harvard and focused on Comparative Politics in Latin America. Because of the numerous classes that focused on development of Latin American states and peoples, I was able to grasp the nuances of its present day political and economic systems and important relationship to the United States. I use this training every day in my professional career. I managed all trade and investment for Latin America for Massachusetts Governor Romney’s administration. In this public sector position, I work with MA firms to expand exports to Latin America, and work with Latin American firms to locate here and take advantage of our workforce and resources. Drawing on the similarities between Massachusetts and several Latin American industries and public sectors, I convinced the Administration to direct even more resources towards Latin America including opening overseas offices in Brazil and Chile. My job—and my passion—is to build bridges between Massachusetts and Latin America. Being a history major at Harvard inspired me to care about the countries south of the U.S. by showing how important they are to my own country; it also gave me the intellectual abilities to do something about it.”

Margaret Weatherford, ‘95—“Like many liberal arts graduates, I went to law school after college. Practicing law was not for me and I later got a master’s degree in library science. I am now a law librarian at the Department of Justice. My training in history at Harvard has helped my intellectual and professional development, but I feel that it is more relevant to my personal interest in history than to my job.”

Journalism

Marc Ambinder, ‘01—“We learned how to become historical detectives, what evidence is, was, how it fits, and doesn’t, with a narrative, how to spot logical fallacies, how to mine reams of data for facts, and how to fit evidence into an interpretative framework. As a journalist, I can say that there was no better formal training than my Harvard history degree. I spent four years covering politics at ABC News. I’m now at the Hotline, the daily bible of political analysis for political professionals

and elected officials. I've written for the Atlantic, for Washingtonian, and I am a regular contributor to National Journal."

Garrett M. Graff, '03—"I've found my history training useful at every turn of my career. Perhaps more than anything I've benefited from the extensive writing and research skills that the history concentration stresses. My career path first took me into politics after graduation, where I was deputy national press secretary for Howard Dean's presidential campaign and later helped found a internet strategy consulting firm in DC, before venturing back into my intended career as a journalist, first as the author of an influential media blog (www.fishbowldc.com) and then as a contributor and eventually editor at Washingtonian magazine, where as editor-at-large I oversee the front-of-the-book section, Capital Comment, and cover politics and media. I'm also embarking on writing a book, "The First Campaign: Democrats and the Digital Age," looking at how technology is reshaping the political landscape, and which will be published by Farrar, Straus, Giroux in fall 2007. At each turn, I appreciated the extensive writing and revising done in the history tutorial program and the broad knowledge base that I accumulated as an American History concentrator."

David Ottaway, '96—"I majored in Modern European History at Harvard and focused on The French Revolution and spent a year studying in France. I began my career as a foreign correspondent in Algeria which had just gone through an eight-year-long struggle for independence against France. I later went back to graduate school at Columbia University where I eventually got my Ph.D. in comparative politics just as I was joining The Washington Post. I worked there as a foreign correspondent and national security and investigative reporter for 35 years. I think my fascination with the French revolution and French history was the formative experience for my journalistic career. It took me to France where I studied during the Algerian war for independence. My French history studies eventually led me to Algeria, where I had my first experience as a foreign correspondent that convinced me this was the line of work I wanted to pursue in my life. I ended up working as a foreign correspondent in Europe, the Middle East and Africa—the three areas whose history and politics I had studied at Harvard and Columbia. So the connection between majoring in history at Harvard and what I ended up doing with my life was pretty close."

Rich Tenorio, '00—“I am currently a copy editor for the Lynn Daily Item and a cartoonist for the Cambridge Chronicle. As a journalist in print and images, I am interested in fascinating stories, and history is about fascinating stories. While studying History at Harvard, I had the opportunity to learn how to describe such stories, by reading about them and by writing about them. A good journalist is supposed to make readers feel a connection between themselves and the subjects of a story. Writing history papers at Harvard helped me think about how to do that. What made this challenging at Harvard was that I had to discuss people who lived hundreds of years ago. Yet the idea of conveying the essence of a subject remains as important and useful to me today as it was in Robinson Hall.”

Nikki Usher, '03—“My background as an intellectual history concentrator has been incredibly helpful in my professional life. I began my career as a journalist. I worked all over the country, and my ability to do archival research and understand the historical context for the events, the geography, and the culture I encountered was crucial to success. As I embark on an academic career as a Ph.D. in Communication at USC Annenberg, I have found the connections and mentorship I received from Harvard’s History Department absolutely crucial. I took many seminars during my time at Harvard, and these classes gave me the opportunities to work closely with professors. I also had opportunities to work as a research assistant for two professors. However, my most valuable experience as a history concentrator and as a Harvard student was writing my senior thesis. I used this work to demonstrate my capacity for original research and organization. I often referenced it as evidence of my high-quality work at Harvard. Finally, writing the thesis itself was invaluable preparation for my future as a journalist and an academic.”

Law

Christopher Bayley, '60—“I’m amazed that you can find old concentrators after all these years. I have had careers in law, politics and business. My senior thesis on the Centralia Massacre in November 1919 certainly moved me along the political and legal tracks.”

Katy Brodsky, '02—"I was a History concentrator at Harvard and I focused on American history of the 20th century. I just graduated from NYU Law School and am now working in Cape Town for the International Center for Transitional Justice. I took a course at Harvard on the history of the criminal justice system in the United States, and found myself fascinated by the horrible treatment of African Americans during the Reconstruction period. This led me to law school, because I really couldn't understand how vigilante justice had been able to take hold in the South during my grandparents' lifetime. At law school I continued to study race relations, primarily through a study of criminal law and the death penalty. I am now working in South Africa with an organization that works with emerging democracies and was actually started by Desmond Tutu and Alex Boraine, both chairmen of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. My interest in History stemmed from the classes at Harvard. If I hadn't taken that class at Harvard my career could have taken a very different path."

Meredith M. Brown, '61—"I majored in American history at Harvard and went on to a career in law, primarily at Debevoise & Plimpton LLC, where I practiced from 1966 through 2004. For many of those years I chaired or co-chaired the Corporate Group and the Mergers & Acquisitions Group. I retired at the end of 2004 and now am of counsel to the firm. I consult, write (primarily history, law, poetry) and do non-profit work."

Tim Browne, '96—"Studying history at Harvard helped me figure out how to read pages and pages of material and to sort them properly. It also taught me to keep everything I learned in perspective and compare one agreement, law or era to another. These two processes were essential to doing well in law school and especially now in my professional career as I read hundreds of pages of documents, agreements, and articles every day."

George M. Burditt, '44—"Being familiar with both American and European (particularly British) history has given me an excellent background in law school and for the practice of law. When someone mentions King John and the Magna Carta, or the Declaration of Independence or a provision of the Constitution, I have at least a

reasonable background to help me get started on the issue. History has also been very important in my life as a topic of conversation. At our 50th Harvard reunion, my roommate and I had a debate, with appropriate submission of briefs and oral arguments, over the existence of the Antonine Wall. Our third roommate was the judge. The final argument was outside at a resort on the Cape with 50 of our classmates and family cheering on one side or the other! Go History!!”

Jennifer Burns, ‘98—“After majoring in History at Harvard, I was head and shoulders above all my incoming graduate school classmates in terms of preparation. The revamping of the department around 1996 made a huge difference. These kids will all do fine and when they end up with the law firm partnership, all they’ll wish they could do is sit around and learn about history, literature, art, etc...”

Stephen Chen, ‘94—“My undergraduate training in history was very useful to me. History is a concentration that requires you to read a great deal of both primary and secondary sources, to synthesize and summarize the information in those sources, and to articulate your analyses and positions based upon that information. Similarly, my work calls upon me to sift through large amounts of material, synthesize that information and then argue persuasively for the positions I support. Although the substantive knowledge I gained during my 4 years at Harvard as a history concentrator is not generally useful to me day to day, the skill set I acquired in being a history concentrator is useful to me every day.”

Peter Christodoulo, ‘03—“In my professional life I have been an entrepreneur and an investment banker and will soon be a private equity investor. My training in history has served me well in these endeavors by enabling me to write more clearly, organize large amounts of unstructured data and to more ably perform research in areas where sources are not obvious or information is scarce. I would recommend to anyone contemplating a career in business to strongly consider a concentration in history as it has given me many important tools to be successful in the workplace.”

Jared Eigerman, ‘92—“During my first year at Harvard, I decided to concentrate in History after methodically investigating many other

options, ranging from social studies to linguistics. I never worried whether what I chose would help me get a job after college. My goal was to study in a department with professors I respected and courses I found interesting. My undergraduate concentration in History did lead to my career as a land use lawyer. I have joint graduate degrees in city planning and law. I live and work in San Francisco representing real estate developers attempting to obtain all the various government approvals needed to build anything here, whether a simple house or a 2,000 unit redevelopment project. My job is as dependent upon my skill in local politics, especially negotiation, as it is upon mere law. I could not serve my clients successfully as a mere technician.

Concentrating in History did, in fact, make me a better thinker and a writer. I also believe, rightly or wrongly, that I am much more easily able to understand the significance and meaning of specific government policies and real estate trends than those who cannot fall back on a good knowledge of history, of any sort. Many lawyers and city planners I work with also studied, or at least respect, history as an academic field. I do not think that is a coincidence.”

Julia Hiatt, ‘03—“I was always interested in social justice. I chose a U.S. History concentration because I felt that having that base of knowledge would better equip me to pursue this kind of work. After graduation, I worked for three years as a legal assistant first in a small employment rights law firm, and then for the Reproductive Freedom Project at the American Civil Liberties Union. After taking some time off to travel, I will enter New York University Law School in the fall. I plan to practice public interest law, and I am pleased at the foundation of knowledge and research and writing skills my history concentration has provided me.”

Mark Horowitz, ‘02—“The courses I took as a history concentrator, specifically the sophomore and junior tutorials, were great preparation for law school. However, they were even better preparation for actually practicing as an attorney, because the writing and oral argument and presentation skills you learn as a history concentrator are directly applicable and extraordinarily valuable to any practicing attorney. The difference between a decent attorney and a great attorney is generally the quality of their analytical, writing, and speaking skills; my history courses at Harvard prepared me much better than most of my peers in law school and my fellow associates in my law firm in those areas.”

Tyson Hubbard, '04—“Like many of my classmates I am enrolled in law school. I will begin my second year in the fall at Syracuse University. I think the thing that stands out most about a history degree is how much writing that I was asked to do. Writing is one of those things that you have to practice at in order to get better. As I history concentrator at Harvard, my writing improved dramatically from when I started.”

Thea Johnson, '03—“I have had so many great experiences since college that I think were greatly influenced by my time in the History Department at Harvard. Directly after graduating, I became a paralegal in the Sex Crimes Unit of the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office. I had written my honors thesis on changes in the rape laws in New York City, with a chapter dedicated to explaining the creation of the Manhattan Sex Crimes Unit. It was a great topic during my interview, of course, and also really helped me gain a historical perspective on my real-world job. After my year as a paralegal, I spent two years at the American School of Quito in Quito, Ecuador as a middle school history teacher. Having the opportunity to impart my own love of history on the generation of students below me was a wonderful experience. Finally, I find myself on the doorstep of law school, which will be the next phase of my post-Harvard life. I really feel that all these fascinating opportunities were available to me in no small part because of my study of history at Harvard.”

Andrew Kalloch, '06—“I’m a recent grad, so not much to offer in this space. History definitely prepares students well for the rigors of law school.”

Mark Kaplan, '92—“History is not directly relevant to being a lawyer or any other career other than academia although obviously some elements of history do impact law. However, I do think that the analytic and writing skills developed in my history courses were useful in law school and in future practice. Most importantly to me is that I continue to have an abiding interest in history and read many a history book for pleasure.”

Neil Kennish, '01—“Like many other history concentrators, I majored in history because I liked the subject matter, but I didn’t expect

to make my career in the field. After graduating I began working at a management consulting firm in Boston. At first it was a tough transition as I needed to familiarize myself with economics principles that many of my co-workers had already learned in college, as most had either been applied math or economics majors. However, what I quickly came to realize is that picking up economics fundamentals is like learning any other subject matter - it just takes time and practice. What my history degree gave me was much more than just subject matter familiarization was invaluable skills. I can say without any hesitation that choosing to concentrate in history was one of the best decisions I made - not just for the enjoyment I got while studying it as an undergraduate, but for the invaluable tools it gave me to succeed in the field of business.”

Dennis Kerbel, ‘95—“As a lawyer, the two skills I rely on most are the ability to read enormous amounts of material in a short span of time and the ability to summarize the knowledge I have gleaned from that material in a concise document. Not coincidentally, those are the two skills that being a history major most helped me develop. Indeed, between summarizing mounds of files and interviewing scores of witnesses, much of litigation is essentially writing history—albeit history that no one but the litigants cares about. I studied primarily American history. As a lawyer working in government, I regularly deal with constitutional issues. I often find myself drawing on what I learned about this country’s formative years to better understand what could otherwise be dry legal doctrines. Most importantly, history provides much-needed perspective on the world: it is always interesting to see history’s greatest debates repeat themselves, whether on the international stage or in local politics.”

Emily Kuo, ‘97—“As lawyers, we are often called upon to synthesize large amounts of facts and information and to find patterns and trends within. As litigators, we also need to be able quickly to ‘cut to the chase’ and craft the most crucial, most persuasive, and most understandable argument from the multitude of data presented to us. A history degree has provided beneficial in all of these tasks. It has enabled me to become a better reader, a better writer, and a better oral advocate when presented with the (his)stories that arise in current legal problems and dilemmas.”

Terrence P. Mann, '96—"Studying history was excellent preparation for a career in the law. I am currently a partner at a large international law firm."

John McGuckin, '68—"History has kept me sane for nearly 40 years. I loved history too much at the College to make it my vocation. I tell people I'm a lawyer by vocation, a historian by avocation. I have had numerous articles published on a variety of local, Catholic and family history and genealogy topics, plus a recent book entitled "Edward Le Breton, Friend and Benefactor", a full-scale biography of a 19th century San Francisco banker and philanthropist. It took me two years to research and write and my training at Harvard in history laid the foundation for the work, including the ability to read and translate French, which was a product of my senior thesis. I read history all the time and have an article and another book on family history in progress. I don't think I could get through the pressure of my day job without the release my historical work presents."

Garrett Moritz, '00—"The history concentration develops skills in writing, research, critical study of primary sources, reconstructing chronological narratives from often fragmentary records, and considering multiple perspectives and the varying economic, political, and cultural forces underlying human behavior. In addition to being the tools of the historian, these skills are all essential to being a lawyer."

Kyung Namkoong, '92—"Studying history made law school quite manageable. Close reading and analysis of texts are integral to the practice of law. As a lawyer, I felt very comfortable with my research and writing skills, with no small thanks to my undergraduate studies."

Valerie Novales, '04—"I spent a year as a paralegal post graduation in Boston. I am currently a student at Notre Dame Law School and will be spending my second year of study at ND's London campus. I worked in Miami as a Summer Associate for McDermott Will and Emery, and will continue with the firm in London, come October."

Rachel Barber Schwartz, '99—"I attended law school following graduation. I am currently an associate in the litigation group at Bryan Cave LLP in New York City. I have found that my study of history at

Harvard prepared me well for the law school experience and a career as a litigator. The study of history at Harvard encourages one to view events in a comprehensive way, an approach which is valuable in a legal setting. In addition, litigation involves a lot of research and writing - the very skills the history concentration focuses on developing. I view the training I received in the History Department and the tutorials in particular as having been very important in developing my career path.”

Jennifer (Botelho) Satija, ‘01—“Although I have not made a career of history, it was a great help in furthering my legal career. The reading, research and writing that I had done for history was extremely relevant preparation for the technical side of what I had to do in law school and as a lawyer. Also, my studies of twentieth century American history and of international relations enriched my study of the law. Particularly in law school, when you spend a great deal of time reading very old law, an understanding of the broader sociopolitical landscape of the time that produced the cases I was reading made them more interesting, and also enhanced my understanding of the law that grew out of them. Such knowledge is also critical to certain avenues of legal reasoning, such as Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia’s dedication to interpreting law in the context of the time that created it.”

Margaret Segall, ‘03—“After graduating with my BA in History, I took two years off to work in New York, take a break from school, and apply to law school. I am now in my second year at Harvard Law. I am working this summer in the legal department of Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York, but am interested in ultimately going into litigation. While I chose History as a concentration because it was so interesting and enjoyable for me, I have found it to be very helpful in my legal studies. The process of tracing a legal trend or idea through its history of case law is very familiar to me, but most of all, it was my historiography tutorial that has helped me the most in my professional training. In that course I learned how to use description in telling a story, or the emphasis on certain facts, to convey one’s thesis or argument, a skill that is crucial when making a legal argument. The ability to frame a set of facts in a specific way is a skill that I will certainly value for the rest of my career.”

Ari Waldman, '02—“Research and writing skills matter to a young lawyer. When analyzing an argument for a brief, I fall back upon much of what I learned concentrating in history at Harvard: extensive research, multiple sources of support, lucidity of language, and completing work under deadline pressure. The fact is you can do anything with a history degree from Harvard. The training the department offers not only prepares you for that next step into academia, but also exposes you to public speaking and writing for varied audiences, i.e., skills that salesmen, politicians, executives, and even scientists use in their working lives.”

Richard Worf, '03—“Though I am just beginning my career, I am in my final year of law school at Yale. I am also working as a Law Clerk to Judge Lanier Anderson, 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. A much more persuasive example, however, would be the current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Roberts, who was a history concentrator at Harvard.”

Media

Will Bressman, '04—“As I made the natural transition from studying the past to working in the media, I've been struck with how much and how little my historical studies have mattered in my professional career. Having worked at ABC News Good Morning America and now moving to a video broadband startup, on the surface there seems to be few tangible bonds between my undergraduate studies and my professional life. I deal now in the current, modern and fast paced environment that seems to have little in common with the analytical, erudite historical world. Yet such a cursory analysis would not be befitting of my history education. Indeed, in addition to the obvious skills like being able to express myself clearly and write proficiently, learning history instilled within me a curiosity about the world and a yearning to understand how events unfold the way they do. This invaluable lesson was the common thread throughout my historical training and has been an invaluable skill as I've set out in the media world.”

Medicine

Megan Callahan, '96—"I always knew I was going to become a physician, so I considered my time at Harvard to be an opportunity to explore areas I would likely not have a chance to learn about during my long slog through medical education. I had always loved history in high school, and after I took a course on the Civil War during my freshman year at Harvard, I knew I would concentrate in History. I loved reading and I loved learning about people and culture. History seemed to be a good place to cultivate those interests. In the past, most physicians majored in a science or engineering as undergraduates. People are still a little surprised when I tell them I concentrated in history. It is difficult to get all your medical school prerequisites done while you are pursuing a degree in a humanities concentration. However, I think the skills I learned as an undergraduate have helped me to be a better doctor, and I still get to do the two things I liked best as an undergraduate; I read a lot and I learn about people and culture. Having spent some time thinking about how human experience is recorded, I think I listen better than some of my colleagues and I think my 'historical curiosity' helps me ask better questions. I hear a patient's story, ask questions, and then synthesize that with my medical knowledge to write about the patient in a way that can help my colleagues to understand them and why they are in the hospital. I try to transmit some of my patient's humanity through the words I record. I still think about some of my tutors and teachers and know that they have helped me to become a better doctor."

Benjamin Delbanco, '02—"I am currently in my first year as a medical student at the Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia. My experience in the Harvard History Department, and in particular my experience writing a thesis, defines for me my undergraduate academic experience and is something I still think about quite often. More importantly than that, the training I received has already made me a more complex person, and will someday make me a better doctor. There is nothing more important in medicine than the relationship between a doctor and his/her patient. There are aspects of humanity that cannot be learned in a laboratory or from a textbook, and I am grateful to Robinson Hall and all of my teachers for their role in making me a more thoughtful and empathetic person."

Anna Evans, '04—“The transition from history to medicine has highlighted for me the knowledge of people and cultures that I gained during my undergraduate study. As I travel and meet people inside and outside of the hospital, I come into contact with people of all different religions and geographic origins. I am always thrilled to have even a basic understanding of the history of their geographic region or their religious beliefs. It seems that people are more receptive to a doctor who is interested in them and their culture, and this open communication is crucial for both doctor and patient. The cultural education that I received through studying history is what gives me the ability to converse with people of all different backgrounds, and this will be a source of strength for me throughout my career. I also developed critical thinking and analysis skills in the History Department that have enabled me to pursue academic reading with a more scholarly approach. I am more comfortable reading and interpreting primary sources after writing a thesis in history, and now check footnotes regularly in other authors' works to discover how they use certain evidence to draw conclusions and define general trends. This is of huge help to me as I aim to become well-versed in the literature of the history of medicine. It is through the reading, writing, and research experience I gained in the History Department that I have been able to gain the skills and confidence to pursue these goals.”

Michael Evers, '95—“I entered Harvard fully intending to go to medical school. Concentrating in History allowed me the freedom to complete my pre-medical requirements and explore my interest in the Civil War without having to give up one for the other. The process of developing a thesis topic, doing primary document research and writing the thesis over the course of a year was an intense academic experience. The study and organizational skills I cultivated served me quite well in medical school. The beauty of the History Department is that you can tailor your thesis to whatever you find interesting. I was able to combine my interest in medicine and the Civil War by writing about the Union Army's Medical Department. The insight I obtained into 19th-century medicine offers me a perspective about medicine that I reflect on often during my daily work.”

Kenan Stern, '02—“I majored in history with the intention of pursuing a career in medicine. I chose history because I enjoyed history

in high school and wanted to improve the depth of my understanding of our nation's past. I studied American History and wanted an intellectual diversion from all the pre-med requirements I had to fulfill. History was not merely a diversion, however. The process of crafting coherent arguments based on available evidence is one skill an education in history provides, and this ability will come in handy no matter what career you decide to pursue."

Non-Profit Management

Josh Dieterich, '93—"History surrounds us in everything we do. Understanding the past helps guide decisions today, and it was at Harvard that I began to understand how to approach history. More than names and dates, history became an exploration of stories for me at Harvard. I began to appreciate the complex relationships between individuals and governments, movements and social networks, and the foundations that our society is built upon. My current position as an educational fundraiser has made me appreciate Harvard's own history. The Harvard that we enjoy is built upon the past - a fact that is inescapable to most of us, but appreciated more by those of us who enjoy history. While I may not have expected my history background to lead me here, it has been immensely enjoyable to bring my understanding of early American history to bear on my work promoting Harvard's interests today. The overlap between Harvard and American history is great!"

Jeanna Emert, '01—"History isn't just memorizing dates and names. It's about actions, and feelings; about learning how men and women have responded to unique situations over thousands of years, and how their choices have changed humanity's path. Concentrating in History at Harvard forced me to think not only about how our ancestors' actions changed our history, but also how my actions in this lifetime would affect the course of human history to come - both for good and bad. I work for a nonprofit company because, on a very small scale, I make history every day - by providing healthcare for women who can't afford it, or helping pass legislation which will give more children access to vaccinations they need. No other department allows students to explore with such a wide lens, and no other department is as good at integrating other disciplines — art, music, or sociology, for example—with the existing

History curriculum. On a completely personal note, concentrating in History at Harvard has also made me a killer Trivial Pursuit player.”

Katherine Haas, ‘00—“I may be somewhat in the minority, in that I am actually employed in a history field, in my case as a museum professional. I wanted to pursue a museum career since high school and after graduation from Harvard I worked at the Peabody Essex Museum, and SPNEA (now Historic New England) before going back to school for an M.A. from the Winterthur Program Early American Culture. I am currently the curatorial assistant at the Rosenbach Museum & Library, a small museum in Philadelphia which combines an amazing rare book library with holdings in the fine and decorative arts. One of the challenges and joys in museum life is to take a very specific artifact, like a painting or a ceramic plate, and to be able to use it to tell a larger story. In order to do this effectively I rely heavily on my working knowledge of the themes and topics in American and world history, including social history, political history, gender history, and much more. At the same time, I must also be able to locate very specific information. I use my Harvard history training every day at work in a very direct way and hope to continue doing so for many more years.”

Ellen Harkavy, ‘04—“As a development officer, my job is focused on building and stewarding relationships. It may not seem readily apparent how concentrating in History prepared me for success in my career path, but I feel strongly that my work in the department prepared me for the challenges of my job. I have a good memory for names and dates - a great skill for working in development or for studying high school history. Instead of memorizing facts, I learned how to examine sources, critique arguments, and write persuasively. Faculty members and teaching fellows taught me how to ask targeted questions and how to construct sound theories. These same skills apply in my current job as I often need to marshal ideas and data to make a compelling case or ask probing questions to understand a complicated situation. A degree in History did not mean that I would get every quiz show answer correct, but that I would leave Harvard better prepared to analyze issues and make thoughtful arguments.”

Jennifer Leed, ‘96—“My history degree taught me how to learn, how to write, and how to understand society. These broad abilities have wide

application in my non-profit management career.”

Winthrop Ruml, ‘04—“After graduating from the Modern European History track, I began working as the Special Assistant to Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, the Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University / Director of the UN Millennium Project. The Earth Institute seeks to address problems facing the planet and its inhabitants, focusing especially on sustainable development and the needs of the extremely poor. The UN Millennium Project advises the Secretary General on the Millennium Development Goals and also advises several countries on poverty-reduction strategies. My coursework in history prepared me by establishing a framework for understanding the roots of many issues facing us today. I’m expected to draft articles frequently. I am comfortable and confident with any research and writing projects. Courses on the post-colonial experience of the 20th century were particularly helpful for my work concerning African economic and political development. I have traveled to 20 countries for my job, and my work in several of those countries, esp. in Central Asia and the Middle East, was made easier by the background knowledge provided by the History Department.”

Religious

Jonathan Page, ‘02—“For my first job out of Harvard I taught high school history in England. I am now studying to become a Protestant minister at Yale Divinity School. History, and especially the ability to read history critically, is essential to any ministerial preparation. Christianity makes its claims based on historical events not only in the first century in Palestine, but also in the long sweep of Christian history since then. Studying history has certainly mattered in my professional life and will continue to matter in my future.”

David Wolkenfeld, ‘03—“September I will begin my third year (out of four) at YCT Rabbinical School. In addition, I am enrolled in a Masters program in Medieval Jewish History at Yeshiva University. My enrollment in a Masters program in History is a direct result of my decision to concentrate in History at Harvard. The knowledge in Jewish History that I gained from professors as an undergraduate is the foundation of my current graduate school studies. More interestingly,

I have found that the knowledge and skills that I gained as a History concentrator are useful and extremely valuable to me as a rabbinical student. We spend most of our time in the yeshiva (rabbinic academy) studying ancient and medieval texts. The skills of a historian and the sensibility of a historian can add an extra dimension of sophistication to that study. Furthermore, when considering how to create communities that provide meaningful spiritual experiences, the historical record is a rich source to mine for other ways that Jewish communities have responded to these challenges. I am happy to speak with any Harvard students considering a career in the rabbinate, or considering enrolling at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University.”

Writing/Publishing

Selamawi “Mawi” Asgedom, ‘99—“Believe it or not, my history concentration helped prepare me for a career in writing and motivational speaking. Since graduating, I’ve inspired more than 300,000 students in thirty states, and have given principal training at the Harvard School of Education. The history skill I found most useful was the ability to structure a nuanced argument that could withstand intelligent scrutiny. A great presentation, much like a great history paper, weaves logic with style, and above all, connects with the reader/listener.

One of the things I learned as a history concentrator is that history is implicitly written about those who matter most. Upon graduating, I wrote a family memoir of my experiences as a black refugee growing up in the U.S., partly to declare that black refugees do matter. The rest of my career has progressed from that first book. One of the best experiences I had at Harvard was the sophomore tutorial where we studied various types of histories, and then wrote our own histories. I didn’t realize at the time that three years later I would write my own culture memoir that balanced personal events with larger political realities. My memoir has now sold over 100,000 copies and is read in thousands of classrooms across America. Black refugees do matter!”

Abigail Gabrielse, ‘00—“The discipline of history taught me analysis, research, and writing skills. After graduation I worked as an ESL teacher in China for two years. I used the skills I learned as a history concentrator

to observe the culture, research all sorts of things, and to teach writing to my students. When I returned to the States, I got a technical writing job. There is a lot of analysis inherent in capturing various processes in manuals and workflows. Though the subject matter of technical writing isn't nearly as thrilling as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the mental exercise is very similar to history and satisfies me."

John Robinson, '91—"Fifteen years after graduating, what I notice most about those folks who concentrated in American history is that they understand context. I have written two novels about the gem trade in Africa, the treatment for the movie *Hotel Rwanda*, and I'm working on another book called *Love and Gambling*. History was a wonderful concentration. Those who toil among the stacks don't know how lucky they are."

Ira Stoll, '94—"Studying history at Harvard helped me learn how to write clearly about facts, and how to dig facts out of archives, and about the history of America. All of these skills have been useful in my career as a newspaper reporter and editor, writing about current events but with a deeper understanding of historical context and with the ability to unearth and make sense of historical documents that bear on people in the news. I've also gotten a book contract for a biography of an American founder, so my training as a historian is coming into play even beyond my main job as a newspaper editor."