Ferreting Out the Faux Bordeaux

Maureen Downey ('94) spots the fakes in rare wine

The Campaign for Boston University

CHOOSE TO BE GREAT

bu.edu/campaign

See what the launch of our first University-wide campaign means for BU—and how you can be part of it.

bu.edu/winterfest

Join the fun February 8–9, 2013.

- Friday night hockey and pre-game
- Roundball tournament
- Hot tuddy-muddies
- Back 4 clothing
- Game on. Who’s ready?

HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

BU’S MAKING HISTORY.

Winterfest
Let me describe something I like to call the “SHA Virtuous Circle,” and offer my thanks to you for making it happen through your time, generous donations, and strong support.

The SHA Virtuous Circle starts here: It is a known fact that the reputation of a great school in a great university is built on the foundation of its best assets—our alumni and friends. Remarkably, we now have more than 2,000 SHA alumni and thousands more friends. You are the reason SHA is becoming more prominent every day. Our thanks to you.

The strength of your accomplishments after leaving BU, or the discussions about SHA you have with others, have meant that when it is time to recruit hospitality management students, great companies come to visit SHA looking for people just like you. In fact, to you, we had more than two dozen company recruiting visits during spring 2012, and our new graduate placement record was among the highest of any BU school or college.

The reputation that you, our alumni and friends, enhanced while working as undergraduate interns or as the people who mentored them, guarantees the success we have in offering more internship opportunities to our current undergraduates every year. Once again, this past year we had more requests for interns than students to fill them. This happened while our SHA student interns were gaining the skills they need to fast-track their careers when they enter the workforce. And for that, we have you to thank.

The more internships leading to better job offers our graduates have, the easier it becomes to recruit exceptional entering students from around the world. Once again, thanks to your professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.

And, of course, the stronger our incoming freshmen and transfer students are, the stronger our future SHA alumni and friends circle will become. Great schools attract great students; great students, great professional successes, we have started the semester with a stronger core of international students, more transfers from other colleges, and another entering class with exceptional admissions statistics. This is all because of the success that you, our alumni and friends, have created. You have more than earned SHA’s gratitude.
As a convention center for East Africa, Akilah’s curriculum gives graduates the skills and confidence needed to start careers in this important industry and contribute to the country’s development.

“The students loved it,” says Tucker. “They see it with, and it was vastly successfully. We ended up with eight boxes of books, and ESD geared up to be a strategic partner with Akilah when the institute’s executive director and two graduates came to Boston this fall.”

The Akilah Institute is also well known to SHA overseer Ed Fuller (SMG’68), formerly of Marriott International LODGING. After they graduated in August with Akilah’s first class, 14 women headed for Marriott International’s 10-month training program, which leads to full-time employment. They might even find positions at Marriott’s first-ever property in sub-Saharan Africa, a five-star hotel in Kigali projected to open in June 2013.

The SHA community will continue to support these women as they transform their futures. Tucker writes in a blog, “My experience has shown me that vision, hope, and hard work can make anything happen.”

—Terry Goodloe

WEB EXTRAS Read Erin Tucker’s blog and learn more about the Akilah Institute for Women at www.akilahinstitute.org

No Lack of Concentration

EVENT MANAGEMENT AMONG NEW AREAS OF FOCUS

“Whether you need to hire an event planner or an accountant, look no further than SHA,” Tucker says. “The school is introducing new concentrations to meet those and other industry needs. The changes occurred after a holistic examination by the faculty revealed or confirmed three realities. First, that students can benefit from focusing on a particular interest, be it a mainstay of the hospitality industry or an emerging area such as event management. Second, that sophomores, juniors, and seniors—with their disparate levels of understanding and experience—sometimes mingle in elective courses, and teaching them effectively can be a challenge. Finally, that students—especially transfers—often go to summer school to meet all SHA graduation requirements so they can walk with their class. “We wanted to make the SHA education experience better for the student,” says Chair of the Faculty Stanley Buchin. “Dean Muller set the process in motion; there were a lot of cooks, and I wiped the dishes,” Buchin jokes. In fact, he says, input from colleagues, students, and the hospitality industry were invaluable in shaping the changes, which will take effect in 2013:

1. Concentrations will be available in five areas that will reflect student interest and industry needs, including event management.
2. Students will have to take all the required courses at a particular level (e.g., 200 level) before they can take an elective at the next level (i.e., 300 level).
3. The core curriculum will be streamlined so all students can elect a concentration, take a semester abroad, and meet graduation requirements without going to summer school.

The requirements for two 400-hour internships and a semester of study abroad will remain; selecting a 3+6-credit concentration will be optional for juniors and seniors.

“This has been a student-focused initiative,” says Buchin. “We designed a package of courses in five areas that we think will help students. But they don’t have to concentrate if they don’t want to.”

Assistant Professor of Hospitality Administration Erin Tucker is helping to shape the event management curriculum, one of the concentrations most called for by both students and employers. “Reality shows feature event planning, and it’s part of pop culture today,” she says. “But companies have a broader perspective. We will emphasize what the event does for the organization, and they will determine if they don’t want to.”

“Assistant Professor of Hospitality Administration Erin Tucker is helping to shape the event management curriculum,” Tucker continues, “and employers are looking for new hires who understand the business side as well as the customer service side. This doesn’t mean we’re not interested in social events, but students can take the skills they learn from the business sector to any other sector.”

SHA’s New Concentrations

ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGEMENT
LOGGING OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT
SALES & MARKETING MANAGEMENT
Andy Andrews has a mystique of his own, one that sets him apart from other hoteliers. He is a man who knows him—just sweat, there’s no magic behind his work, and working with civic and business leaders to boost the profile of a vacation destination that had fallen out of fashion before he arrived. "Thanks in part to his efforts, travelers began to rediscover the island’s white sandy beaches, colorful architecture, and cultural attractions.

Nowadays, 3.7 million people visit Puerto Rico every year (double the amount in the 1970s) and many of them stay at El Conquistador, perhaps the commonwealth’s hottest hotel. Andrews opened this sprawling cliff-top resort in 1993. With fantastic views of both the Atlantic and the Caribbean, the 500-acre complex includes more than 900 rooms, a water park, a golf course, a casino, a bilt boasts luxury condominiums as well as rentals—yet another innovative Andrews restoration project.

CULTIVATING LEADERS
"In addition to those heroic achievements," notes Caribbean Business, "Andrews has made it his core mission to educate and develop local tourism-industry talent into top-notch hoteliers." He chairs a foundation that has awarded 200 Puerto ricans scholarships to study hospitality around the world. Andrews also makes it a point to develop SHA grads into industry pros. Javier Rosenberg ’94 is just one accomplished hotelier who benefited from Andrews’s tutelage. While still fresh out of BU, Rosenberg began his career at the then—nearly-reopened El Conquistador. "It was an incredible experience," he says. "I learned so much from him in so many ways." Andrews is a highly knowledgeable, hands-on owner who never walks into a meeting unprepared, as Rosenberg recalls. "It’s truly leadership I haven’t come across too often: brilliant, compassionate, but at the same time, pushing everyone around him to excel." At first, Rosenberg didn’t quite grasp the rational behind his boss’s directives, he adds with a laugh. "I’d spent several years in different roles in food and beverage, and at one point [Andrews] started insisting that I move into the rooms division. At that time, there was a clear line of separation in our industry; you were either F&B or rooms, and here was my mentor pushing me to go into rooms. The GM even said to me, ‘I can’t have you going into rooms—you’re an F&B guy!’ So we kept making up excuses for me to stay in F&B. Oh, it’s too busy now; ‘Now he needs to focus on his résumé. ‘I was panicking that I was going to become a jack of all trades, master of none. But it actually ended up being the best thing that could have ever happened to me,” he says. "What he’d really given me was an opportunity to improve my leadership skills, which is really what our industry is all about. And I am eternally thankful to him for that. The only other person I think of in that way is my father," who pushed young Rosenberg at an early age to learn multiple languages, which has also proven rather handy in today’s global industry.

Andrews’s lessons paid off. By 2001, Rosenberg was the general manager of the then-Swissotel in Atlanta, and HOTELS magazine and the International Hotel & Restaurant Association named him the Young Hotelier of the World for that year. Today he is the chief operating officer of Radisson and the executive vice president of Carlson hotels in the Americas.

"The price of success is perseverance, period," Andrews told Caribbean Business when he was receiving the hotelier of the year award. "If you plug away and push hard enough, you can do anything in this world, and if you don’t, it’s because you choose not to."
hon James Grandison forked over about $5,000 for some coveted Bordeaux wine, including a bottle of 1949 Chateau Lafleur, he was excited about the auction-house find and felt it worth the splurge. The theology teacher in Berkeley, California, had started buying $40 bottles of wine in the mid 1990s. “Two years later the value was at $130,” he says. “In the 2000s, I ordered wines at $350 a bottle, and three years later, when I actually received them in my hands, they were worth $2,000 a bottle.”

Soe Grandison (STH’91, ’94) could justify plunking down the $5,000, and, as he was meeting Maureen Downey (’94) for lunch after the auction anyway (and he didn’t want to leave the wine in his car, where the heat could sour it), he brought the bottles into the restaurant with him. Downey, an expert in rare and fine wine, examined the Lafleur—or rather, the alleged Lafleur. “I hate to tell you this,” Downey told Grandison, “but this bottle doesn’t appear to be consistent.”

“What does that mean?” he asked.

“The glass is correct, but I don’t like the paper, I don’t like the printing; the capsule looks funny… The cork could be a new cork in an old bottle. Based on all these factors, I think you should get up from this lunch right now, drive back to the auction house, and return it and say you expect a refund.”

Grandison took her suggestion. When he told the auctioneers that Maureen Downey had inspected his purchase and found it suspect, they returned his money, “no problem,” he recalls.

**Ferreting out the Faux Bordeaux**

When James Grandison forked over about $5,000 for some coveted Bordeaux wine, including a bottle of 1949 Chateau Lafleur, he was excited about the auction-house find and felt it worth the splurge. The theology teacher in Berkeley, California, had started buying $40 bottles of wine in the mid 1990s. “Two years later the value was at $130,” he says. “In the 2000s, I ordered wines at $350 a bottle, and three years later, when I actually received them in my hands, they were worth $2,000 a bottle.”

So Grandison (STH’91, ’94) could justify plunking down the $5,000, and, as he was meeting Maureen Downey (’94) for lunch after the auction anyway (and he didn’t want to leave the wine in his car, where the heat could sour it), he brought the bottles into the restaurant with him. Downey, an expert in rare and fine wine, examined the Lafleur—or rather, the alleged Lafleur. “I hate to tell you this,” Downey told Grandison, “but this bottle doesn’t appear to be consistent.”

“What does that mean?” he asked.

“The glass is correct, but I don’t like the paper, I don’t like the printing; the capsule looks funny… The cork could be a new cork in an old bottle. Based on all these factors, I think you should get up from this lunch right now, drive back to the auction house, and return it and say you expect a refund.”

Grandison took her suggestion. When he told the auctioneers that Maureen Downey had inspected his purchase and found it suspect, they returned his money, “no problem,” he recalls.

**Calling Your Collection of Cabernets**

Authenticating wine is just one part of Downey’s work, although it is the part that’s turned her into a sought-after commentator, with the recent indictment of suspected wine counterfeiter Rudy Kurniawan, a.k.a. “Dr. Conti.” Downey is one of just a handful of authentication experts in the rare and fine wine industry, and she began airing doubts about Kurniawan’s “magic cellar” almost a decade ago. Now seemingly vindicated, she’s been doing interviews with Vanity Fair, Inside Edition, Fox Business, and CNBC’s Crime, Inc.

Based in San Francisco, Downey runs Chai Consulting. (Chai, pronounced “shay,” is French for cellar. “I don’t make tea,” Downey says.) With employees’ help, she manages clients’ massive collections of high-end wines—usually bottles numbering in the thousands, often worth millions of dollars. She transforms cellars chockablock with haphazard piles of boxes into neatly arranged repositories organized by spreadsheet and labeling system. She helps clients cull their collections to adapt to their changing tastes or lifestyles, figuring out which bottles to sell and finding the best price for them, and by the same token getting them deals when they want to restock. She acts as an appraiser, sometimes in sticky situations arising from a divorce or inheritance. She teaches about wine and testifies about it in court as an expert witness. And it all started at SHA.

“I took a bar management class freshman year,” Downey says. “It was a bit of an anomaly to be a theology student here, but I felt like I was meant to be here. I had to have a job I could stand behind and be proud of.”

**Alum Spotlight**

Maureen Downey, ‘94

**Chai Consulting**

Maureen Downey, ‘94, brings a detective’s forensic skills to the authentication of labels, capsules, and bottles—just one part of her work managing clients’ collections of rare and fine wines.
year,” she recalls. “Sophomore year, I went abroad, took a four-unit course on the wines of France, and traveled through the French wine regions.” And, as a junior, she and three other young women represented BU in the student division of Kevin Zasly’s International Wine and Spirits Competition, a male-dominated environment. “We walked in and were laughed at,” she recalls, “and we smoked everybody. We won. That was really when the door opened for me.”

Downey got certified as a sommelier shortly after graduation, and was soon hired as manager of Tavern on the Green, the restaurant then in New York City’s Central Park. By 2000, she decided she didn’t want to work another Christmas. She became a wine specialist for a series of auction houses and earned more wine certificates before striking out on her own in 2005.

Since then, Downey has made a name for herself as a smart buyer, seller, organizer, and overall manager of the collections of a range of clients with one thing in common: “Once you’re in the habit of buying and aging wine,” Grandison confirms, “it’s difficult to stop. It presents organizational and storage problems. That’s where someone like Maureen comes in—and actually, there are not a lot of people who can do that. That’s where someone like Maureen comes in.”

Downey compares an authentic bottle with a fake.

WHILE MILLENNIALS MAY HAVE A reputation of waiting for prosperity to find them, no one told that to Kristine Suh ('13, SM'13). From the moment she landed at BU, she’s been busy writing her own success story.

The California native struck out for Boston looking for a taste of independence. She quickly realized that by creating her own opportunities, she was training for her future career. “Something new is going to pop up every day,” she says. “I love doing new things.”

Joining the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMHH) was the key step, Suh says. Through the society, she learned how to network with her hospitality school peers and take on more responsibility, running and organizing professional events and national conferences. “The vision,” she says, “is to get minority students more recognition and more opportunities in hospitality companies. We’re hoping to help them along, give them a step up.” In June, she became the organization’s national chair and charter director, the first BU student to hold such a high position in NSMHH.

Suh is no slouch on campus either. She works as a VIP caterer at President Robert A. Brown’s house with Catering on the Charles, BU’s on-campus catering service. She is also a resident assistant for BU’s Hospitality House and Brown’s house with Catering on the Charles, BU’s on-campus catering service. She is also a resident assistant for BU’s Hospitality House and Brown’s house with Catering on the Charles, BU’s on-campus catering service.

Kristine Suh: This striving senior boosts minorities in hospitality.

BY RACHEL JOHNSON

“Something new is going to pop up every day,” she says. “I love doing new things.”

Joining the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMHH) was the key step, Suh says. Through the society, she learned how to network with her hospitality school peers and take on more responsibility, running and organizing professional events and national conferences. “The vision,” she says, “is to get minority students more recognition and more opportunities in hospitality companies. We’re hoping to help them along, give them a step up.” In June, she became the organization’s national chair and charter director, the first BU student to hold such a high position in NSMHH.

Suh says her own relentless drive to take full advantage of all possibilities, combined with a SHA curriculum that insists on diverse experiences, has given her the chance to be more flexible as she begins the job search in earnest. “Even in the classes we take, we learn to do everything. It piques your interest about different aspects of the industry, and that eventually leads to finding what you really like to do. It’s very important to get a general education about the entire industry. And it’s fun!”

Suh says her own relentless drive to take full advantage of all possibilities, combined with a SHA curriculum that insists on diverse experiences, has given her the chance to be more flexible as she begins the job search in earnest. “Even in the classes we take, we learn to do everything. It piques your interest about different aspects of the industry, and that eventually leads to finding what you really like to do. It’s very important to get a general education about the entire industry. And it’s fun!”

Patrick L. Kennedy contributed to this article.

“ ‘The vision is to get minority students more recognition and more opportunities in hospitality companies.’

WEB EXTRA Read Suh’s post about her internship at Torrance Marriott South Bay on the SHA Student Blog at http://buhospitalitystudentblog.wordpress.com.
Every year, SHA’s distinguished lecture series—a spring semester course that draws roughly 100 students from all class years—brings hospitality heavyweights to campus to share their stories and insights. “We try to bring in the top people from a wide range of companies, so that students can see the breadth of the industry from a leader’s perspective,” says Dean Christopher Muller, who oversees the course.

Each lecture is followed by a roundtable discussion that allows about 20 SHA seniors to interact on a more informal level with the week’s presenter. “The seniors get to talk to the speakers after the presentations,” says Muller. “Older students get to interact on a more informal level with our younger students.”

We spoke to four recent lecturers and asked them to share their words of industry wisdom with Check In readers.

Denise Coll
President, North American Division
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide

“I HAVE A FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF that part of managing one’s career and growing as a professional is dependent on trying things that take you out of your comfort zone,” says Denise Coll, who currently oversees operations, sales, and marketing for more than 500 Starwood hotels. “You shouldn’t be reckless, but you need to be willing to take some calculated risks.”

In the late 1980s, she accepted the challenge of heading up a rebuilding of Sheraton’s central reservation system, even though her background in operations wasn’t the best preparation for this tech-heavy project. “It was a risk, but one I knew I could manage,” she says. The project introduced her to a wide array of new opportunities and senior leadership contacts.

“Often, in making career decisions, I have asked whether I’ll have more options at the end of this experience than I have today.”

Indeed, Coll says her one regret is not taking more calculated risks. “Your ability to perform is completely dependent on getting your peers and subordinates to perform. So, you need to learn how to inspire and motivate.”

In addition, Danziger says, take the tough job. Early on in Danziger’s career, he agreed to turn around a struggling DoubleTree hotel in Tucson, Arizona, rather than take a much easier post for the company in Monterey, California. “It might not seem ideal, but it’s a way to get your hands dirty and make your bones,” he says. “Because it’s not easy and you’ll earn respect for doing something that not just anybody can do.”

Eric Danziger
President and Chief Executive Officer
Wyndham Hotel Group

“EVER SINCE HE LANDED HIS first hotel job in 1971, as the doorman at San Francisco’s famous Fairmont Hotel, Eric Danziger has known the value of learning a business from the bottom up. He’s also learned the value of taking a risk and leading a team to grow a business from scratch. Today, he is responsible for the operation and strategic direction of more than 7,000 hotels in 66 countries around the world.

Danziger says the most important lessons of his career weren’t always the easiest to learn. His foremost piece of advice is to appreciate the value of your team. “When you start out, you think, ‘If I’m good, that’s all I need to be a success.’ But you learn that’s not what it’s about,” he says. “Your ability to perform is completely dependent on getting your peers and subordinates to perform. So, you need to learn how to inspire and motivate.”

In addition, Danziger says, take the tough job. Early on in Danziger’s career, he agreed to turn around a struggling DoubleTree hotel in Tucson, Arizona, rather than take a much easier post for the company in Monterey, California. “It might not seem ideal, but it’s a way to get your hands dirty and make your bones,” he says. “Because it’s not easy and you’ll earn respect for doing something that not just anybody can do.”

Bruce Percelay (SMG’77)
Chairman and Founder
The Mount Vernon Company

“BRUCE PERCELAY WORKED FOR NEARLY a decade in advertising after graduating from BIU. On his lunch breaks, he helped his dad renovate and flip a Beacon Hill condominium. More property renovations and sales followed, and, in 1986, Percelay left his day job to start a real estate company that now owns and manages approximately 1,400 apartments, as well as commercial and vacation properties.

“Learning real estate by trial and error is a great way to learn the business, but the cost of tuition is very high,” he says. One of the key lessons he took from his years in marketing is “Never start thinking the status quo is OK, because it isn’t.”

Percelay’s other keys to success include building customer loyalty by striving to give them “more than they expect” and conducting business with “uncompromising honesty.” Of the latter, he says, “It’s not only the right thing to do, but people will seek you out and pay a premium to do business with you when they know that your handshake is as good as your signature.”

Punit Shah (’02)
President and Chief Operating Officer
Liberty Group of Companies

“You need to learn how to inspire and motivate.”

“The son of first-generation immigrants from India, Punit Shah says entrepreneurship is in his blood. In the last 10 years, he has rebuilt and expanded the Liberty Group, his family’s real estate development company, building and managing hotels, luxury waterfront condominiums, and assisted-living facilities in Ohio, Georgia, and Florida. To date, Shah has overspent $250 million in commercial real estate developments. Shah encourages others to follow the entrepreneurial path, and he offers two main pieces of advice for those who do.

First, dream big. Shah’s parents retired and sold all their hotels right after he graduated, so he faced a blank slate when he joined the family business as the director of new development. “It took me several years to grow the company again and diversify it,” he says.

Second, if you’re going to dream big, then you can’t be afraid to fail. Shah’s first years as a developer coincided with a real estate boom. When the bust came in 2006, he had to pull the plug on multiple developments. “I lost tens of millions of dollars,” he says, but like any true entrepreneur, he took stock, and looked for a new opportunity.

“It was a hard lesson, but it set me up for future success because I learned to face those challenges head on.”

“I have a fundamental belief that part of managing one’s career and growing as a professional is dependent on trying things that take you out of your comfort zone.”

“If you’re going to dream big, then you can’t be afraid to fail. Shah’s first years as a developer coincided with a real estate boom. When the bust came in 2006, he had to pull the plug on multiple developments. “I lost tens of millions of dollars,” he says, but like any true entrepreneur, he took stock, and looked for a new opportunity.

“It was a hard lesson, but it set me up for future success because I learned to face those challenges head on.”

Check In
Boston University School of Hospitality Administration extends a very special thank-you to all those alumni, parents, and friends who made gifts between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012.

THANK YOU, DONORS!

$5,000+    
Emil K. Sopher (SHA'09)  Jacob S. Sonheim (SHA'09)  

$2,500–$4,999    
Timothy C. Haukas (SHA'88)  Robert E. Hart (SHA'82)  
Anthony M. Holm (SHA'04)  and Brenda K. Heike (GSS'89)  

$1,000–$2,499    
Irma Mann  George C. Domolky and Manuel R. Costa (CGS'72, SHA'88)  

$500–$999    
Alice S. Cohen  Kurt E. Bohlsen (SHA'94)  

$250–$499    
Annie Chen and Peter Chen  Jeffery G. Saunders and Andrew George  

$100–$249    
Lawrence A. Grime  Alexandria L. Grime (SHA'08)  

Anonymous  

John H. Collins (GSS'01, SHA'04)  

Robert I. Earl  Sushil B. Jadhav (SHA'88)  

Amelia E. Taylor (SHA'08)  

Thomas W. Hare  

Nancy G. Bliss  

NCM Management Inc.  

AFLGS member  |  Faculty/Staff member  |  School of Hospitality Administration  

Young Alumni Giving Society member  |  School of Hospitality Administration  

AFLGS member  |  Student  

$10,000–$24,999    
Kopf Family Foundation Inc.  

$5,000–$9,999    
PKF Hospitality Research  

$2,500–$4,999    
Farragut, Inc.  

$1,000–$2,499    
Howard Johnson Motor Lodge  

$500–$999    
Diane Rubtchinsky  

$250–$499    
Hakan Caglayan (SHA'08)  

$100–$249    
J. David Holman (SHA'08)  

$50–$99    
Chemiya Capital  

$25–$49    
OAK Hotel Group  

$10–$24    
Hilton Worldwide  

$5–$9    
Hyatt Corporation  

$2–$4    
International Hospitality Management  

$1–$2    
Pinnacle Advisory Group  

$500–$999    
Taylor Family foundation  

$250–$499    
Costa Food & Produce Company  

$100–$249    
Can Enterprises, LLC  

$50–$99    
Kendall College  

$500–$999    
ComTech Hotel Society/New England District Executive Committee  

$250–$499    
Osborne Group Hospitality  

$100–$249    
Metropolitan Hospitality Group  

$50–$99    
Executive Sales Group  

$500–$999    
Asynchronous  

$250–$499    
Anonymous  

$100–$249    
Niccolo Hospitality Inc.  

$50–$99    
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Inc.  

$500–$999    
Tumulty & Moore Architects  

$250–$499    
Anonymous  

$100–$249    
Piper J. Jones  

$50–$99    
LaSalle Hotel Investments  

$500–$999    
Anonymous  

$250–$499    
Indianapolis University  

$100–$249    
Anonymous  

$50–$99    
International Hospitality Management  

SCHA welcomes news of our alumni’s professional and personal achievements and milestones. Please write to us at busha@bu.edu. You can also connect with SCHA online at www.bu.edu. (Under Groups, select “School of Hospitality Administration.”)

JESSICA AROG O'BRIEN ('99)'s 13th reunion reunions were well attended and a huge success. Jessica was a special assistant attorney general at the Illinois Department of Revenue and acting chief counsel of the Illinois Lottery.

EMILY WILLIAMS KNOTT ('95) was recently named president of Kendall College, a member of the Laureate International Universities network. Located in Chicago, Kendall offers undergraduate degrees in business, culinary arts, hospitality management, and early childhood education. Kendall Knotts has served as CEO of New England University LLC and as vice president of marketing and sales strategies for Pearson Teacher Education and Development. Early in her career, Knotts managed executive training meetings at Marriott’s Key West resort in Florida and taught business at Montgomery County Community College in Pennsylvania. “Emily’s experience and leadership skills make her a natural choice for the role of president,” says David Graves, CEO of Laureate Hospitality, Art & Design. “Her passion and relentless energy will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the future of Kendall College.”

MAX SCHOLAN ('99) recently graduated cum laude with a JD from the Maurer A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University. Max received the Benjamin Weintraub and Alan Risken-Braum Law Award, as well as the William Eric Goldberg Scholarship. He has accepted a judicial clerkship with the Hon. Christopher Sontich, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, District of Delaware. Max lives in Smyrna, NY, with his wife, AMANDA (TURNER) SCHOLAN (COM'03) and their two-year-old daughter, Emily. Email him at Mischolans@yahoo.com.

Boston University School of Hospitality Administration
Ferretting Out the Faux Bordeaux

Maureen Downey (’94) spots the fakes in rare wine