

Trailblazing Tritons: Notable Alumni Forge Diverse Paths

Alumni Honorees and True Tritons to be celebrated over UC San Diego Alumni Weekend

Events Open to the Campus Community

On Thursday, June 8 at 4:30 p.m. in the Price Center, DJ Patil will discuss his work as well as the future of data science in a conversation hosted by Assistant Professor of Cognitive Science Brad Voytek. Admission is free for students and alumni. **To RSVP**, visit the [webpage](#).

On Friday June 9 at 7p.m., the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Downtown will host an evening of art and cocktails, where Weems will be the featured speaker. \$20/person. **To RSVP**, visit the [webpage](#).

To learn more, please visit the Alumni Weekend [website](#).

A writer makes us laugh until we cry. Two doctors save thousands of lives around the globe. A mathematician harnesses the power of big data to help shape public policy. A visual artist strips away stereotypes of race, gender and socioeconomic. Who are these pioneers? They're Tritons—esteemed graduates of UC San Diego. And June 8-11, they will be honored during our Alumni Weekend on campus.

The 2017 Alumni Celebration will mark the 39th year the university has recognized our graduates for bringing honor and distinction to UC San Diego with their outstanding achievements. Additionally, it is the 4th year we have recognized True Tritons—alumni who have shown an extraordinary commitment to the university. The awardees are selected by a committee made up of elected and former members of the Alumni Association's governing board.



From left, Rachel Axler, Gary Darmstadt, Brian Druker, Dhanurjay "DJ" Patil, Carrie Mae Weems.

Alumni Honorees

The Writer. Rachel Axler's, MFA '04 (Theatre) list of writing credits would make any scribe jealous: "Veep," "Mozart in the Jungle," "Children's Hospital," "How I Met Your Mother," "Bored to

Death,” “New Girl,” “Parks & Rec,” and “The Academy Awards.” Her first writing job was for “The Daily Show,” where she was the only female writer on staff. In addition to her silver screen credits, Axler has also written several plays, including the Off-Broadway “Smudge,” which revolves around the most basic questions of humanity and love. Rachel Saltz of the New York Times praised Axler for having “a comic’s gift for language that is precise and imaginative, but never showy.” She has won three Emmy Awards—two for “The Daily Show” and one for “Veep.” Her writing has appeared in the New York Times and McSweeney’s.

The Global Public Health Champion. Gary Darmstadt, M.D. ’89 (School of Medicine) is associate dean for Maternal and Child Health, and professor of Neonatal and Developmental Pediatrics in the Department of Pediatrics, both at the Stanford University School of Medicine. Prior to his post at Stanford, he was the director of Family Health at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, where he often traveled to India on the foundation’s behalf and saw firsthand how infant mortality could be prevented with better post-natal care. He believes in “enculturating science”—learning about a community’s beliefs, social structures and pathways to acceptance—as a way to encourage developing communities to adopt modern medical practices. He has won the BRAVO Award from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; is an advisory board member of Maternal Child Health, World Health Organization, South-East Asia Region; and is a board member of Project Mercy.

The Oncologist. Brian Druker ’77 (Chemistry), M.D. ’81 (School of Medicine), is the director of Oregon Health & Science University’s Knight Cancer Institute, the Jeld-Wen Chair of Leukemia Research and a professor of medicine. In 2009, he received the Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award for his influential work in developing imatinib (commonly known as Gleevec), used to treat chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). Prior to the drug’s development, the five-year survival rate for CML patients was around 30 percent; now the ten-year survival rate is around 80 percent. Druker has received the Warren Alpert Prize from Harvard Medical School and the Japan Prize in Healthcare and Medical Technology. He is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The Data Scientist. Dhanurjay “DJ” Patil ’96 (Mathematics) is credited with coining the term “data scientist,” so it is only fitting that in 2015 he was appointed the White House’s first chief data scientist. Prior to that, Patil used reams of data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to improve weather forecasting models. He then worked for the Department of Defense, this time using data to predict and curb terror attacks. In Silicon Valley, he did stints at eBay, Skype, PayPal and LinkedIn before returning to the East Coast to work for the Obama Administration. He was selected by CNN as “One of Tech’s Most Powerful Disruptors” and named to Forbes’ list of “The World’s 7 Most Powerful Data Scientists.” In 2016, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter awarded Patil the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the highest honor the department bestows on a private citizen.

The Artist. Carrie Mae Weems, MFA '84 (Visual Arts) is a renowned visual artist working in text, video, audio and photography and has had over 50 exhibitions around the world, most notably at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; the Frist Center for Visual Arts; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Often focused on questions of race and gender, Weems' works seek to break down stereotypes to uncover the hidden humanity of her subjects. Her most well-known works include *Ain't Jokin'*, *The Kitchen Table Series*, and *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*. A recipient of the MacArthur "Genius" Grant, Weems has received many honors and awards, including from the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. State Department (Medal of Arts) and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (Lifetime Achievement Award).



From left, Jerrilyn Malana, Emmy Sobieski, Junling Sun.

True Tritons

Additionally, UC San Diego will honor three alumni as True Tritons for going above and beyond to help advance the university's mission on campus, in the community and around the world. This year's honorees include:

Jerrilyn Malana '86 (Psychology) is Chief Deputy for Employment/Special Advisor at the San Diego County District Attorney's Office, where she advises on employment matters and civil issues. She is a current member of UC San Diego's Alumni Board of Directors Executive Committee and serves on the board of the UC San Diego Foundation. She also mentors the Student Foundation Board. Malana is a past president of the San Diego County Bar Association and has received the "Women Who Mean Business" award from The San Diego Business Journal.

Emmy Sobieski '88 (Economics) is a CFA Senior Research Analyst at Nicholas Investment Partners and member of the Economic Leadership Council at UC San Diego. She continues to give back to her alma mater as a career speaker, panelist and mentor to promote student professional success, and has also created training sessions to help prepare students for networking and job hunting. Sobieski is co-founder of the campus's Rising Leaders Scholarship Program, providing career-launching opportunities for undergraduates interested in investment banking, finance, or general business.

Junling Sun, Ph.D. '93 (Structural Engineering) is president of Sun Engineering Consultants International and was the chief engineer of the Shibampo Bridge in Chongqing, China—the largest box girder bridge in the world. Sun has continued to give back to the Triton community by building strong alumni networks in China, offering students internship opportunities, and making donations to the chancellor's scholarship initiatives. Sun has been a member of the UC San Diego Board of Trustees since 2012 and is a founding member of the campus' 21st Century China Center.

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