



# ON THE VINE

THE IVY CLUB NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019

## Interview with Celebrated Author Joanne Ramos '95

*Joanne Ramos was born in the Philippines and moved to Wisconsin when she was six. After working in investment banking and private-equity investing, she became a staff writer at The Economist. She currently serves on the board of The Moth and lives in New York City with her family. **The Farm**, her debut novel, is a national bestseller and has been chosen by over 50 media outlets in America and abroad as a "must read" in 2019. The Farm was longlisted for the Center of Fiction's 2019 First Novel Prize.*

What are your most valued memories of being at Ivy?

Some of my fondest memories of Ivy take place in the Green Room. I liked to lounge there before or after meals. There were always magazines strewn about, people slouched in beat-up chairs drinking coffee or smoking, reading, talking.

What is your definition of literary success?

The funny thing about success is that, if you're a certain kind of person, you achieve it and then keep redefining it so that it continues to remain elusive. If you'd asked me my definition of literary success when I first started *The Farm*—when I'd just turned 40 and after a twenty-year hiatus from writing fiction—I would have said: finishing a book that I believe in. I still think this is a true definition of literary success, but I've since expanded it. Over the past five months that I've been on book tour, I've met countless readers who've told me that *The Farm* meant something to them. Maybe the book gave them a new perspective or a different understanding; maybe it served

as a mirror; maybe it made them mad, and they were forced to question the sources of their anger, and they discovered something in the process. For me, literary success has come to include a connection to the reader and the goal of not simply entertaining her, but in some way, shining a light, and shaking things up.

What advice would you give to your undergraduate self?

To 18-year-old Joanne: Don't worry so much about having a plan. Don't feel such pressure to know where you're going. Of course, you've got to be practical—it's a luxury of the privileged to believe the world will shape itself around one's passions and whims, and you do have debts, and you do need to pay rent. But leave the door open to the unknown, and leave yourself open to surprises. The world is vast and rich and unexpected if you dare venture into it with an open heart and open mind.

What kind of research went into preparing for *The Farm*?

When I committed to writing a book, I hadn't written fiction since college. But the ideas behind the book were ones that had consumed me for most of my life—ones rooted in my experiences, and the people I'd come to know, as a Filipina



[above] Joanne Ramos '95

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

### A look inside...

Graduate President's Report.....	Page 2
News from the 1879 Foundation.....	Page 4
Ivy Reunions.....	Page 5
In Memoriam.....	Page 5
Message from Ivy's Undergraduate President.....	Page 6
Graduates in the News.....	Page 7

## Graduate President's Report



[above] **Dominic Moross '90** 140 and 150 members which sets us apart from the other clubs and ensures Ivy's intimate ambiance.

The semester has started on a strong footing, led by a first-class group of officers who well represent Ivy's international diversification, hailing from Ireland, Egypt, Senegal and the US. September started with a fun cookout, followed by a busy and buzzing weekend of Lawnparties. Under the strong leadership of David Babikian '20 and bicker chair, Shehab Thabet '20, we had a successful fall bicker through which we accepted 8 new members.

Chef Jean departed over the summer and has been replaced by a superb team led by Nestor Pacheco and Cynthia Cruz, who, respectively, have been with us now for 20 and 10 years, and supported by Alex Baltazar and Jim Edwards. Thanks to the open-minded perspective of Betty and the help of Harriette Brainard (a former local restaurateur) we listened to constructive member feedback and now offer a number of different vegetarian, and gluten-free options. We have received rave reviews about the varied range of higher quality meals. Our kitchen team's professionalism and culinary skills were well displayed at our October Parents Dinner, which once again exceeded our expectations, with over 200 attendees and parents from all over the world.

While I have focused on activities at the Club, our network expands well beyond Prospect St. I was pleased to unexpectedly bump into Ivy Governor Len Coleman '71 and Charlie Barr '71 at the Kentucky Derby in May. Our encounter echoed the tenor of Ivy's dining hall as we watched the

horses race, broke bread and debated the world's problems!

As we head into the festive season, I wish you all a wonderful holiday and hope to see as many of you at our 140th Anniversary Dinner on December 5th at New York's Racquet & Tennis Club.

All the best,  
Dominic



[above] **Ivy Governor Len Coleman '71, Dominic Moross '90 and Charlie Barr '71**



The Board of Governors of The Ivy Club cordially invite you and a guest to join us for

***A Dinner to Celebrate  
Ivy's 140th Anniversary***

We are honored to welcome  
Lt. General Christopher G. Cavoli  
(Ivy '87)  
Commander of the U.S. Army in Europe  
as our speaker for the evening

Thursday, December 5, 2019  
Racquet and Tennis Club  
370 Park Avenue  
New York City

Reception - 6:30 p.m.  
Dinner - 7:30 p.m.

Business Attire

Cost for the evening is \$190 per person.  
Reservations can be made online at: [theivyclub.org](http://theivyclub.org)  
or by contacting the Steward, Betty Rascher, at (609) 924-2236,  
or [steward@theivyclub.net](mailto:steward@theivyclub.net)



## Joanne Ramos '95

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

immigrant to Wisconsin in the late 1970s, a financial-aid student at Princeton, a woman in the male-dominated world of high finance, and a mother of three in the era of “helicopter” parenting. In particular, I was interested in the story of the American dream and the fiction of an American “meritocracy”. I was raised on this narrative, and I first started to question it in earnest at Princeton, when I realized that there were all kinds of ways to become a Princeton Tiger—and not all of them had to do with working hard and doing well in high school.

Even with these ideas, embarking on writing a book after such a long hiatus from fiction writing wasn't easy. I spent every weekday morning for well over a year trying to figure out a narrative that could hold all the ideas I wanted to explore. I wrote short stories, flash-fiction pieces, “first chapters” that went nowhere.

Then one day, I happened to read an article in the *Wall Street Journal* about a surrogacy facility in India. The what ifs began pouring onto the page: What if I moved the surrogacy facility to America? What if I made it a luxury one that catered to the richest people in the world? What if the surrogates were mostly poor women desperate to improve their lives?

The world of *The Farm* began to take shape almost immediately. I didn't research surrogacy facilities, or much of anything, really. I created the world of Golden Oaks, and I got to know my characters, and the story unspooled. It was only once I sold the book and began giving talks about it that I began to learn more about surrogacy facilities and commercial surrogacy in general.

### How would you describe the relationship between entertainment and education?

Fiction, because it's “made up”, asks the reader to take a leap of faith, to put himself in the author's hands and suspend belief. Because of this, I think a reader of fiction is often more open-minded in how he approaches a work than someone reading a book of non-fiction or even memoir, which are rooted in the “real world”, where all of us have our preconceived biases and political bents. In other words, I think a reader is more likely to come to a non-fiction book armed, and more likely to come to a work of fiction disarmed—and because of this, I think fiction has the power to open our minds and show us new ways of seeing the world.

### What has been the most difficult aspect of the book?

The biggest challenge for me was believing I could do it. I'd dreamt of writing a book for so long. Taking the plunge when I was already in my forties—that is, truly committing to the day-in, day-out process and discipline and craft of writing—was intimidating. You don't sell your book proposal at the outset, as you do in non-fiction works. You write the entire thing—years of your life!—in the hope that someone, someday, might want to publish your work. For well over a year, I wrote in the dark, learning by doing. It was trial and error, countless false starts. What got me through those many months before I got the idea for *The Farm* was persistence and faith—and a beyond-wonderful husband and kids who believed in the book even before I had a good idea for it.

### What do you hope people take away from your book?

The world of *The Farm* is meant to be our world pushed forward just a few inches. I didn't want to create a world so far ahead of ours that the reader could dismiss it as “sci-fi” or highly improbable. *The Farm* is meant to reflect our world amplified and changed just enough that a reader might see her reality with new eyes.

One of my hopes in writing the book was to disorient the reader. To make him feel uncomfortable with the world of Golden Oaks, and then ask himself: why am I so uncomfortable with this world when it isn't so far off from where we are today? What about *The Farm* makes me uneasy—and does this then mean I am uneasy with the world as it currently is, the world we have, through our collective decisions or lack of decisions, chosen for ourselves?

I also hope that in writing the book's four narrators as full-fledged people versus villains or saints I can reflect how complex people are. I think we label people too quickly, particularly across chasms of money, race, gender, political opinion, motherhood, and these labels hinder us from truly seeing each other. If the book has reinforced anything for me, it is the importance of not simplifying people. I hope *The Farm*, in its own small way, can convince some readers to see others more clearly.



## News from the 1879 Foundation

| By Couty Fall



[above] Ken Levit

On Monday, October 21st, Ken Levit, father of our undergraduate Treasurer Nate Levit '20, spoke at the Club about his diverse career in intelligence, education, and social justice. Mr. Levit began his career in Tulsa Oklahoma, practicing corporate law at the firm of Crowe & Dunlevy. Between 1998 and 2000, Mr. Levit acted as Special Counsel to George Tenet, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. After leaving the CIA, he served as President of the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa until 2006. He is now the Executive Director of the George Kaiser Family Foundation, a \$4 billion foundation dedicated to civic enhancement and combating poverty. He is also involved in several other civic organizations. He chairs the Tulsa's Future Commission of The Tulsa Regional Chamber, Teach for America-Oklahoma and as a member of the Teach for America National Council. He also leads the board of the Woody Guthrie Center—a public museum and archive in Tulsa that is dedicated to the life and legacy of American folk musician and singer-songwriter Woody Guthrie.

Mr. Levit led a dinner discussion with club members describing his career and answering questions about philanthropy, alternative career routes, and the social sector.

The event was part of the Ivy Leadership Speaker series. The Ivy Leadership Committee, spearheaded by Matthew Merrigan '20, brings accomplished individuals to the Club for dinners, discussions, and panels. Speakers in the past have ranged from on-campus professors like Rachel Ferguson, Bernard Haykel, and Joshua Katz, to government leaders such as General David Petraeus and James Baker III (Ivy '52), and CEOs (Bob Hugin of Celgene). Last year, Chef Jonathan Waxman, known as one of the pioneers of California cuisine and also father to Hannah Waxman '19, visited the Club and cooked a delicious meal while speaking

about his experiences as a world-renowned chef (see photos below). The Ivy Leadership Committee has redesigned the program to now focus on more intimate gatherings with speakers, while never missing an opportunity for membership-wide celebrations.



**The Ivy 1879 Foundation** is the charitable arm of the Club. Our primary role is to support scholarships, educational initiatives and the historic preservation of the Club. Recent preservation work includes the restoration of the ceiling in the Cuyler Writing Room. Under the leadership of Holly Sanderson Garrett '91 (President), Alex Evans '90 (Secretary) and Alex van Hoek '08 (Treasurer), the Foundation also supports the Roundtable Program and Leadership Speaker Series. In addition, the Foundation is currently providing financial support for Ivy undergraduate members who need assistance with their membership fees. The Foundation works closely with the Ivy Board of Governors to secure the financial health of the Club.

Donations to the Ivy 1879 Foundation are always welcome and very much needed. All contributions are tax deductible.

## Ivy Reunions



## In Memoriam

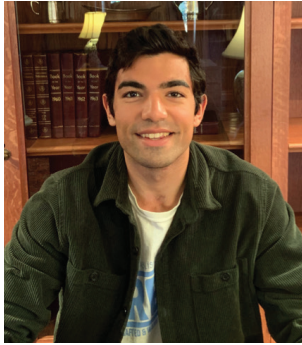
**Redmond C.S. Finney '51**  
 Reddy Finney died in Maine on July 31, 2019 at age 89. He was a retired headmaster of Gilman School, where he spent 49 years as a student, teacher, coach and administrator. Along with Hobey Baker (Ivy '14, honored for football and hockey), Finney was one of only two Princetonians to be elected to two national collegiate halls of fame (football and lacrosse). A complete memorial will appear in the spring issue of *On the Vine*.

**Samuel A. Hartwell '52**  
 Sam died in July 2019 at the age of 89. He was a graduate of Deerfield, served in the US Army in Korea, and earned an MBA from Harvard in 1956. Following a long and successful career at Smith Barney and Merrill Lynch, he co-founded the East Harlem Employment Service, a non-profit that was an early model for workforce development, and directly helped more than 100,000 people find and keep jobs. Sam was an avid reader, skier and

hiker. He was predeceased by his wife of 60 years, Anne V. Hartwell. Sam will be forever remembered for his insight, optimism and service to others, and sorely missed by his friends, four children, eight grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and his beloved dog Clementine.

**Charles J. Hatfield II '62**  
 Charlie Hatfield came to Princeton from St Paul's School with the Class of 1959, but left Princeton to join the Marine Corps. He became undergraduate president of Ivy and served on the Club's Board of Governors from 1977 to 1987. Charlie was a superb athlete who played quarterback at St Paul's and was goalie of Princeton's hockey team, and he was a lifelong sailing and tennis enthusiast. He died in Maine on July 8, 2019, in the 60th year of marriage to his wife Nancy. His congeniality, generosity and sense of humor will be missed by all who were lucky enough to know him.

## Message from Ivy's Undergraduate President



Dear Graduate Members, Parents, and Friends of Ivy,

I hope you are all well! It is my pleasure to write to you with an update on the undergraduate experience at the Ivy Club. This fall at the club has been extremely pleasant, with a variety of events thus far and a great schedule for the rest of the semester.

We started off this semester strong. Nine new juniors were admitted in fall bicker, all of whom have made great additions to the Cub. Along with the other juniors who joined during spring bicker, the Ivy section of 2021 has made themselves quite at home, enjoying meals and the company of us very wise, very mature seniors.

As this is my last year of Princeton, I am blessed to spend it with my dear friends in this club. Tasha,

Couty, Shehab and Nate are pleasures to work with and wonderful housemates. We have organized a few great social events so far this fall, and are looking forward to our upcoming events that continue in Ivy tradition. I am proud of the progress Ivy has made in upholding its standard of excellence and, as an unbiased third party, I can verify that it continues to be the best club on the street.

The clubhouse is in great condition. From studying in the library to playing pool or ping pong downstairs, use of the Club continues to bring members together. The food has been impeccable, and we are grateful to the kitchen staff for their work to provide Ivy's meals. Of course, this all would be impossible without Betty, now celebrating her 20th year as the club's steward. Betty, thank you for your service to Ivy.

To our graduate members, we hope to see you around the Club soon! You are always welcome to stop by and enjoy the company of your fellow Ivy members.

Best regards,  
David Babikian, Undergraduate President

### Ivy Club Staff:

**Nestor Pacheco - 20 years- Head Chef**  
**Sergio Candel - 19 years - Maintenance/Housekeeping**  
**Cynthia Hernandez Cruz - 10 years - Breakfast/lunch chef**  
**Victor Cruz - 10 years - Maintenance/Housekeeping Supervisor**  
**Rasheed Williams - 9years - Dishwasher**  
**Lorena Ruiz - 9 years - Dining Room Server**  
**Carmen Minera - 4 years - Dining Room Server**  
**Jose Pelaez - 5 years - Kitchen Helper**  
**Alex Baltazar - 2 years - Dinner Chef**  
**Antonia Davila - 2 years - Dining Room Server**  
**Miriam Solares Chojon - 2 years - Dining Room Server**  
**James Edwards - 2 years - Weekend Chef**  
**Lateshia Johnson - 1 year - Dining Room Server**  
**Carlos Bariones - 1 year - Prep Cook**

### New Employees:

**Oscar Reyes - Maintenance/Housekeeping**  
**Elisa Rivera - Dining Room Server**  
**Edwin Gonzales - Weekend Dishwasher**  
**Marvin Carrillo - Evening Dining Room Captain**  
**Nathaniel Booker - Kitchen Helper/Dining Room Server**

## Graduates in the News

Through her London- and Nairobi-based private equity firm DiGAME, technology investor **Nnena Nkongho '96** is helping to develop young companies throughout Africa. DiGAME worked closely with online education provider GetSmarter to expand its business globally, and double its revenue within a single year. In 2018, DiGAME was recognized for its successful sale of GetSmarter to US firm 2U, Inc.

Design Guild Architect and founder **Kevin Wilkes '83** was featured speaker at this past summer's Wooten Tribute, presenting on the future of Princeton, followed by a discussion with panelists including Princeton Mayor Liz Lempert, NJ Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker, and Princeton Councilman David Cohen. The topics of sustainability, affordable housing, historic preservation and education were discussed, among others.

An FDA-approved therapy is targeting what doctors call ALK positive cancer. **Bruce Dunbar '89**, always fit and never a smoker, was diagnosed with ALK positive lung cancer, which involves a genetic alteration of a patient's lung cell DNA.

Within a month his oncologist prescribed the FDA approved drug Alecensa, which aims to target ALK positive cancers. 20 months into treatment, the tumor that had been found in his lung is now only one-tenth of what it used to be. Dunbar, former captain of the swim-team at Princeton, is back in the water and staying fit, hopeful that further progress will be made in terms of treatment and immunotherapy.

Strategy executive **Benjamin Tagoe '09** has been hired by VantageScore Solutions as Senior Vice President of Strategic Planning and Alliances. Tagoe will be responsible for perfecting the ongoing strategic plan focusing on the growth of the VantageScore model among consumer lending institutions, and new growth initiatives.

**Andrew Winston '91**, noted speaker and author on the topic of sustainable businesses, delivered the lunch keynote address on "Megatrends and the Big Pivot: Doing Business in a Hotter, Scarcer, More Open and Connected World" at the recent Princeton Environmental panel discussion. The Forum featured over 40 speakers and seven different panels, including mostly Princeton University faculty leaders and alumni who are pioneers in the environmental field.



**The Ivy Club, Board of Governors***William J. B. Brady III '87**Allison Sewell Bridges '96**Peter L. Briger, Jr. '86**James M. Buck III '81**Leonard S. Coleman, Jr. '71**Robert A. Engel '86 (Secretary)**George L. K. Frelinghuysen '73**Benjamin H. Griswold IV '62**Jack Henderson '19**J. Regan Kerney '68 (House Chair)**George C. Knight '89**John C. MacMurray '61**Kevin McGowan '95**Corbin R. Miller '71 (Treasurer)**Dominic H. R. Moross '90 (President)**Moyin Opeyemi '19**Shea Owens '94**Folasade Runcie '18**Ryan M. Salvatore '02**Marco A. Tablada '93**Antony L. Taylor '01**William C. Ughetta Jr. '82**John L. Zacharias '11***Ivy 1879 Foundation, Board of Trustees***Erik M. W. Caspersen '92**John F. Cook '63**Alexander D. Evans '90 (Secretary)**Gregory L. Guyett '85**Frances P. Jain '97**Wyatt G. Rockefeller '07**Caroline R. Shifke '12**Alexander T. van Hoek '08 (Treasurer)**Holly Sanderson Garrett '91 (President)**T. Randolph Harris '72 (Counsel)***Staff***Steward**Betty Rascher**steward@theivyclub.net**(609) 924-2236**Director of Member Services**Alanna Boudreau**alanna.boudeau@theivyclub.net**(607) 597-9242**Director of Development**Harriette Brainard**harriette.brainard@theivyclub.net**(802) 989-3800***Donations**

The Ivy 1879 Foundation supports the preservation of Ivy's historic Clubhouse, educational initiatives including Leadership and Roundtable programs, and financial aid to help Ivy students maintain their membership in the Club.

Tax-deductible donations to the Foundation can be made by check or online at [theivyclub.org](http://theivyclub.org)  
**Thank you!**

