

# 91 NEWS CONNECTIONS

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### The President's Corner



**Thank you all for everything you do to help keep Wellesley fabulous!  
The Class of '91 is the best!**

Thank you all so much for the great support you gave Wellesley in the Annual Fund this year. Our class participation was over 55%, and that is incredibly rare to see from any class in a non-reunion year. Because we broke 50% participation, our class fund received a challenge donation in the amount of \$2700. That will be very helpful as we head toward our reunion year. In her article, Sue Ann addresses the Class Fund and our plan of action to ensure we will be able to have a great reunion. Thank you all for your continued generosity and class spirit!

This newsletter is devoted to the women in our class who are writers and teach writing. One of my very favorite authors in the world is our classmate Susan Elia MacNeal, who is featured in this newsletter.

I hope you are all having a great summer, and I can't wait to read about all of the great writers and teachers and their process in this newsletter!

Trish



### Treasurer's Report

Dear Classmates,

It's early August as I write this, and I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. Summer in Vancouver, BC means a few

things: 1) loads, scads, hordes of tourists, 2) cruise ships, 3) roadwork on every major thoroughfare across town, 4) crazy Pride Weekend downtown, and 5) outdoor enthusiasts carpeting my north shore mountain neighborhood like a lycra-covered ant colony. This is why I am one of the few Vancouverites who prefer the cold, rainy season. I could continue on this theme, but I'd rather move on to some good news in this letter.

We had an unbelievable result for this year's annual fund - over 55% of us donated. I'd like to know how often this has happened for non-reunion classes - methinks not often. Thanks to all of you who participated, the officers' challenge was met which means \$2700 to our class coffers. This is good news because it puts us in a better financial position going into the 30th reunion. For instance, it means the Reunion Committee (you know you want to volunteer for it) won't have to stand over a hot stove all weekend cooking our meals.

If you would like to help the class out financially, there are a few options available: 1) Donate directly to the class through our class store (under "featured items") at <https://1991.alum.wellesley.edu/store.html> or 2) Join next year's annual fund challenge - pledge an amount if we

reach 50% participation for the fifth year in a row.

Enough about money, and on to our theme of writers and writing instructors. In the summer of 1995, between my grad school years, I took a job researching and co-authoring a book for a couple starting their own consulting firm. I was young and broke in a sweltering D.C., but I've never been happier in my career since then. Sometimes I wish I could go back to those quiet days spent in air-conditioned, nearly empty libraries, and the freedom to work where and when I wanted (thanks to my first loaner laptop). I'll even admit to doing some of my best work while riding the Metro. The closest I get these days is dashing off a short, unsolicited article for a D-list industry publication if I have time after completing a client project.

Lastly, I'd like to recognize all classmates who are or ever have been technical or business writers. Without user guides, procedural manuals, status reports, decision memos, client newsletters and the like how would anything get done? As an IT consultant, writing reports is my bread-and-butter. I write at least 500 pages a year, but nobody would ever call me a writer. It's not glamorous work, but it's critical.

-Sue Ann

## From Your Co-Secretaries Summer Greetings Everyone!



As yet another summer comes to a close, Heather and I are checking off our list of secretarial duties, while balancing our other duties as wives, mothers and lawyers. We managed to get together a few times while I was stateside this past spring, to label birthday cards, pull together our magazine article and celebrate Heather's 50th.

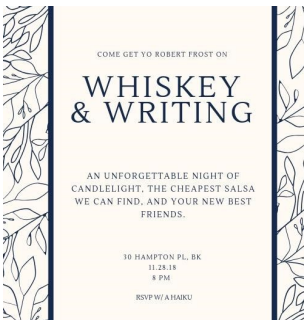
This fall promises to be hectic for us both. My expat stint in Italy is over, so as we pull together this newsletter I am in the middle of a transcontinental move and Heather has a rising Senior, 'nuff said. We are both scrambling.

Although we would love to take credit for the theme of this edition of the newsletter, all of the credit goes to sibling Alexandra Sheller. Alex and Heather met up while Heather was on vacation in England and Alex suggested the topic. And while the revival of the newsletter is something we've loved, coming up with new and interesting themes proves challenging. So please feel free to let us know what you want to see.

Thanks Alex for giving us this edition's theme. Also, a special thanks to our siblings who have forged careers, in whole or in part as writers/authors/writing teachers and who graciously agreed to share their stories with us. Heather and I truly appreciate your contribution. We are always inspired by the stories that are shared here. The goal is to get more of us to share our journey's and the paths that we've created for ourselves.

Last, but not least, we give you our usual secretaries plug. Did you move this year? Change emails? If so, then please, please, pretty please update your contact information with the college. Update at [recordupdates@wellesley.edu](mailto:recordupdates@wellesley.edu). This insures that you receive not only the Magazine and the class newsletter, but also Congratulations, Birthday, Thank You, Condolence and Get Well cards. We can only send them if we are aware of the news and if we have current contact information. Reach Heather and I at [1991notes@alum.wellesley.edu](mailto:1991notes@alum.wellesley.edu) with any newsletter topic ideas, or to request any one of our life event class cards for a classmate. Let's all do our best to stay connected!

## From Your Social Media Chair — Christina Knight



My favorite nights of the year are "Whiskey & Writing," which began when I met two twenty-somethings, both new to New York, at a huge networking event in 2017. Rose chatted me up on the line to the bathroom and invited me to the poetry salon she and Kevin were starting. "I don't write poetry," I said. "That's ok!" was her response.

The salon is a monthly shot of inspiration. I meet a rotating cast of creative, self-aware, thoughtful, hard-working and joyous young people. They're light years ahead of me in personal development.

They tap poetry on their cell phones and I've adopted the platform. But much of the prose I first brought to the salon came on crumbling manilla paper, typewritten in my early twenties in New York. I had never shared those stories and essays before. Most are not finished - just promising starts. They

gush over them and beg me to keep writing. My feel-good moment.

The salon has been on hiatus this summer, when my partner and I spent most nights looking for a new apartment. Before we move September 1, I have to face the papers, notes, books and images I've sequestered for 23 years here. I've vaguely imagined them as resources for some creative project or writing I'll do some day.

To be poetic, I could say I'm unearthing the twenty-something writer in me. To be realistic, I'll continue listening and being listened to once a month in Brooklyn, which is a thrill.

You can share your adventures and misadventures – in writing or whatever your driving or backseat creative pursuit is – in our [Wellesley College Class of 1991 Group!](#) You never know who you might inspire (but you probably will, because: comments 📝👍!) Author Susan Elia MacNeal shared news of the latest novel in her acclaimed Maggie Hope mystery series with our 212 members (the newest are Jennifer Taylor and Romitha Shetty Mally). You can also see Heather Whyte-Kattas' photos from her visit to Wellesley in August and note that Christine Nuwayser Davis shared details on Professor Menkiti's upcoming Celebration of Life event. **The beloved poet and Professor of Philosophy [passed away on Father's Day.](#)**

## Fundraising Chair's Report August 2019

Here are the official Wellesley Fund campaign results for FY19:

### Class of 1991

Dollars raised: \$323,014.

Participation: 55.3%

(up over last year's 51.5% -- nice job!)

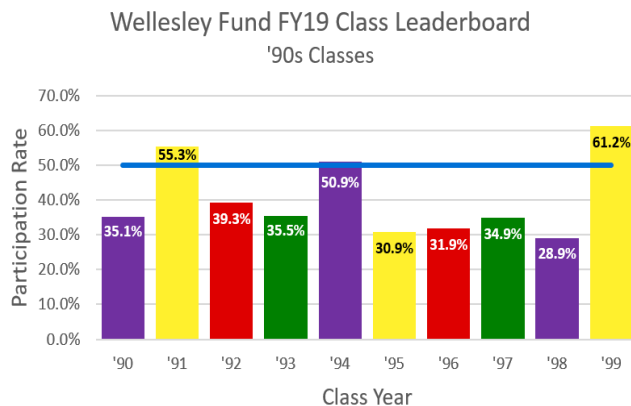
13 Durant donors

Feel free to email me with any questions you might have:  
amy.jasperson@gmail.com

**Special THANKS to the Class Officers, those who contributed to the challenge gift, and all others who reached out to encourage friends to participate!**

**Thank you for your generosity, class spirit, extra effort, and support of the College this year!**

Last, but not least, a **big shout out** to the featured (and other) authors in our class! If you want another fun read, check out this academic methods volume about the insights revealed by real-time responses to political messages.



•Our participation rate this year (55.3%) surpassed the participation rate of each of the 1990s classes last year (in FY18)!

•We surpassed our goal of 50% class participation!! **Thank you!** This is our 4th year in a row of surpassing our 50% goal! Nice job 1991! (This also means that the \$2700 challenge gift will be added to the Class Treasury for Reunion 2020!!).

•We were the **2<sup>nd</sup> most participatory class in our decade!** The Class of 1991 came in just behind the Class of 1999 (a reunion class).

\*246 classmates participated this year (17 more than last year)!

### **Other fun facts about FY19 giving:**

Our participation rate this year (55.3%)

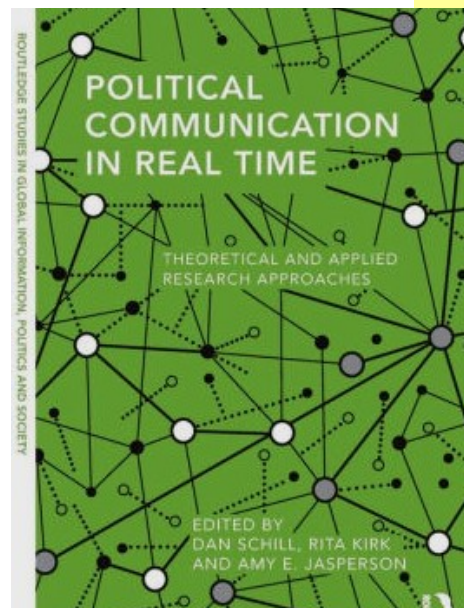
41 donors gave \$26 or less

138 donors (56%) gave \$100 or less

**Please find the names of all donors for FY19 (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019) on page 4 of the newsletter.**

If you were busy and missed your chance to participate, you can donate NOW for FY20 (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020).

[www.wellesley.edu/give](http://www.wellesley.edu/give)



**Amy Jasperson**

Class of 1991 Fundraising Chair

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**(210) 663-1278**

**Wellesley Fund Donors for****FY19:**

*The College provided this list alphabetized by first name of 235 donors. There were 11 donors who wished to be anonymous so they are not listed below. If you do not see your name but you donated and you do not believe that you made your donation anonymous, please email me and let me know!*

Melissa Abraham  
 Susie Synn Adamson  
 Jean Ahn  
 Tanya Andrysiak  
 Rachael Arauz  
 Martina Arndt  
 Sunita Ashar  
 Jana Asher  
 Stephanie Taylor Ashman  
 Ann Baird  
 Jennifer Edmond Baird  
 Angela Barnes  
 Jennifer Barry  
 Anita Russo Bartschat  
 Amy Battles  
 Becky Behar Mekler  
 Danielle Benderly  
 Trudi Lipson Benford  
 Anne Crary Berger  
 Camille Boulware Berry  
 Mary Boehmler  
 Malinda Boothe  
 Jennifer Motley Borggaard  
 Tehka Bowen  
 Alice Bradley  
 Wendy Brauner  
 Cathleen Lambert Breikreutz  
 Elizabeth Brinkley  
 Karyn Brooks  
 Julie Mann Brown  
 Jill Brubaker  
 Catherine Sheehan Bruno  
 Monica Bruno  
 Julie Cahill-O'Shea  
 Jie Cao  
 Stephanie MacDonald Ceruolo  
 Gretchen Block Cerveny  
 Nancy Chanover  
 Radhika Chopra  
 Odile Cisneros  
 Jeannine Cordova Clarke  
 Tiffany Vandeweghe Cleary  
 Rachel Connell  
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 Elizabeth Croll  
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Melissa Dennis  
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 Michelle Caruso Dizard  
 Dawn Kahle Doherty  
 Jie Dong  
 Jennifer Bookstein Driker  
 Ilana Dubin-Spiegel  
 Libby Hayes Elliott  
 Jeanne Gucciardi Emanuel  
 Suzanne Miller Ewing  
 Elvira Falcocchio Turner  
 Amy Ford Fitzgerald  
 Kathleen Fitzgerald  
 Elizabeth Salem Foster  
 Anastasia Frangos  
 Cheryl Frankiewicz  
 Brooke Frewing  
 Lilly Fu  
 Lisa Demers Fuelleman  
 Laura Gammill Marahrens  
 Angela Garling  
 Jennifer Garvin  
 Christine Gasparac  
 Darien Hsu Gee  
 Bonnie Gee Yosick  
 Stephanie Geller  
 Virginia Gold  
 Rachael Portnoy Goldfarb  
 Rachel Goldsmith  
 Stacey Schussel Griffin  
 Judy Hecker  
 Heidi Henderson  
 Jackie Hennessey  
 Melinda Marsh Heywood  
 Charmane Higgins  
 Mieke Holkeboer  
 Pegeen Hopkins  
 Betty Hung  
 Jean Hynes  
 Irene Ilias  
 Katherine Ingraham  
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 Abbie Kozolchik  
 Abigail Kramer  
 Kate Bedard Kraus

Laura McCabe Kuykendall  
 Annette Lagace  
 Heather MacAlister Lajoie  
 Elizabeth Lalumia  
 Melissa Lee  
 Cheryl Fritsche Lejbolle  
 Patricia Lennon  
 Jennifer Lentz  
 Christina Lui  
 Laura Macbeth  
 Sue Ann MacBride  
 Susan Elia MacNeal  
 Nicole Maestas  
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 Tricia Markusen  
 Drayton Wagner Martin  
 Heather Pratley Marx  
 Elizabeth Coffey McKay  
 Allison McKenzie  
 Danielle Guay Megliola  
 Ria Mendoza-Bennett  
 Patty Michaelson  
 Melissa Johnston Mills  
 Liana Halverson Montague  
 Julie Morgan  
 Melissa Moy  
 Emily Mueller De Celis  
 Saira Khan Mushtaq  
 Susan Namkung Torch  
 Britt Nesheim  
 Akiko Niihara  
 Greta Niu  
 Tracey Norberg  
 Merideth Norris  
 Wendy Norris  
 Marianne Oglo  
 Dana Ledbetter Ohler  
 Beatrice Kendzioriski O'Shea  
 Rossana Palomino  
 Margaret Chu Park  
 Teresa Pazdral Hale  
 Heather Peeler  
 Gabriella Pessah  
 Pamela Wilson Peterson  
 Michelle Pierce  
 Lisa Murray Pinkston  
 Jennylou Bassett Powers  
 Elizabeth Preis  
 Elizabeth Putnam  
 Sara Queen  
 Jennifer Quine  
 Heather Mathewson Rainville  
 Sumana Rao  
 Sandra Kristensen Rapp  
 Tina Ravanis  
 Teresa Reading  
 Nancy Rector-Finney  
 Allison Reedy  
 Lisa Hess Rice  
 Jana Riess  
 Tracey Robertson  
 Thesi Roestel

Claudia Romero Prestine  
 Alessandra Niceta Rose  
 Laura Rottmann  
 Linnea Bredenberg Roumillat  
 Mary Griffin Ryan  
 Edith Sachs  
 Audrey Ellis Saracco  
 Sharfi Sarker  
 Tara Moriarty Schiller  
 Rosalind Reynolds Schoenwetter  
 Katherine Schroder  
 Lori Schwartz  
 Tasha Seitz  
 Sophia Shaw  
 Sarah Shealy  
 Dawn Blasberg Shedden  
 Laurie Tribble Sheft  
 Alexandra Sheller  
 Tselane Sheppard-Williams  
 Trish Anderson Sherman  
 Suzette Shipp  
 Lisa Chelmo Snover  
 Robin Sparkman  
 Colby Stanton  
 Elizabeth Legro Stockwell  
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 Tamara Strickland  
 Amye Sukapdjio  
 Lilly Tao  
 Jennifer Taylor  
 Tania Thenabadu  
 Pia Norman Thompson  
 Keli Christiansen Trejo  
 Sunita Verma Tuli  
 Suzanne Manthe Vold  
 Stephanie Volmer  
 Elizabeth Hamilton Wachtler  
 Noralee Walker  
 Margaret Nelson Walters  
 Caroline Wamsler  
 Tara Washburn  
 Kristin Wedemeyer Goss  
 Ellen Weinreb  
 Karin Westman  
 Jill Martin White  
 Karen White  
 Victoria White  
 Heather Whyte Kattas  
 Aretha Wiggs-Grimes  
 Deborah Wiggins Wohlstadter  
 Jennifer Morgan Williams  
 Nicole Wolf  
 Carrie Workman  
 Lisa Wu  
 Holly Yanco  
 Alexa Magna Yannuzzi  
 Diana Yin  
 Lulu Young  
 Wendy Youngblood  
 Shawn Del Ysursa  
 Andrea Zapatka  
 Elena Zee





## Allison McKenzie

Author

As a young child, I wanted to be everything. This made choosing just one career difficult, a dilemma that still perplexes me even now, at age 50. However, because of this indecision, I became a voracious reader and tackled a towering stack of library books every week. I loved mysteries, and Nancy Drew became my favorite

heroine. Ironically, I recently learned that Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, a Wellesley alum, was a key contributor to the series. At ten, I started my own detective agency, but it folded soon after; my home in Oregon, situated in pastoral, rural acreage populated mainly by cows, had zero market demand for young detectives.

Undaunted, I began writing short stories, and later, hundreds of pages journaling the trials and tribulations of adolescence. When I was twelve, I presented a book on time travel at a conference for young authors. Addicted to mysteries and thrillers, I developed a passion for complex plots and exotic locations, but I didn't consider writing professionally as a viable career path.

In high school, engineering and science intrigued me, but ultimately, I found it dry and lacking humanity. At Wellesley, I avoided declaring a major and remained officially "undecided" until I found American Studies. I discovered that I loved looking at our culture through multiple lenses of literature, art, politics, history, and psychology. Life itself is multi-disciplinary, the messy intersection of everything converging together at once. However, with my post-graduation job search looming along with the economic recession of the early 1990s, I thought a traditional major would be more practical, and I switched to English at the last minute.

After graduation, I moved to Seattle. Thanks to a Wellesley alum, I landed at Microsoft, working on children's software. Somehow, twenty years passed, and I worked across multiple disciplines, including software testing, tech writing, and program management, eventually becoming a Principal and Director. In my last role there, I worked with many cybersecurity executives, writing presentations and strategy briefings. Despite the interesting work, I was starting to grow restless with the confines of corporate life.

Around the same time, our daughter was diagnosed with ADHD and autism. Her diagnosis explained why parenting had been so exhausting, and reality hit hard that my husband and I could no longer both continue working insane schedules. Something big had to give, fast. I had always believed our generation of women could have it all, but the truth is, sometimes you just can't. At least, not everything, all the time. I left Microsoft to focus on our daughter, coordinate her multiple therapies, and simply parent her in the ways she needed support.

Two years later, after our daughter had improved significantly, I

considered going back to work. To my surprise, my husband said, "You could, but then when would you write that book?"

"What book?" I asked.

He replied, "You've got a book in you, you just need to do it." I told him I'd consider it, and on New Year's Day, I sat down with nothing but an empty Word document and a vague idea for an international thriller involving cybersecurity.

After two weeks, my tentative notes evolved into several pages, then actual chapters. I haunted Wikipedia, researching everything from Russian oligarchs and ethical computer hacking to Scottish broadswords. I took classes in suspense writing and novel development at Hugo House in Seattle. I dove in headfirst and wrote all day while my daughter was at school, as well as late at night. I interviewed fascinating people, including a former CIA agent, a Doctors Without Borders trauma nurse, a Canadian Mountie, and a Norwegian heavy metal fanatic. I created character sketches, built outlines, and compiled research, thoroughly enjoying the entire process.

Writing a novel truly revived my intellectual energy and creativity. The rigidity of corporate life had left me drained, but now, I feel energized and look forward to my morning writing routine, fueled by music (chill electronica and 80s New Wave), candles, and bountiful coffee. I love the boundless freedom of researching far flung topics and creating new ways of combining ideas and disciplines together. True to form, I couldn't choose just one genre, so my book spans the genres of mystery, thriller, political suspense, and romance.

I finished my first draft of *The Unexpected Hostage* in early June. I'm currently editing and recruiting beta reviewers so I can complete the final draft this fall and find an agent. If you've gone through the publishing process, I welcome your wisdom and advice!

Regardless of your career choice, don't forget to look back to what you loved in childhood—our early interests often provide clues to what will fulfill and inspire us. To everyone out there who wants to write, just start something, anything! Don't wait. See where it takes you. You'll be amazed at what you can accomplish, and what you might learn about yourself and the world during the process.



### Alicia Lopez— Author

Almost five years ago, I started blogging as a way to commemorate my twentieth year of teaching. I used my blog, [www.maestrateacher.com](http://www.maestrateacher.com), as a way to reflect on my practice. I wrote about the mundane, the funny, the serious, and the frustrating aspects of teaching and education.

Though when I graduated from college, I was sure that I didn't want anything to do with teaching, twenty years later I found the outlet of blogging helped motivate me in the classroom.

Then, one day, I was offered the chance of a lifetime when my mother, a lifelong educator, asked me if I wanted to write a book with her. I was elated and nervous; my mother is my biggest fan but also had already published numerous books about education and has had an illustrious career in academia. This was an opportunity I could not pass up. The result was our book, Teaching. A Life's Work: A Mother-Daughter Dialogue.

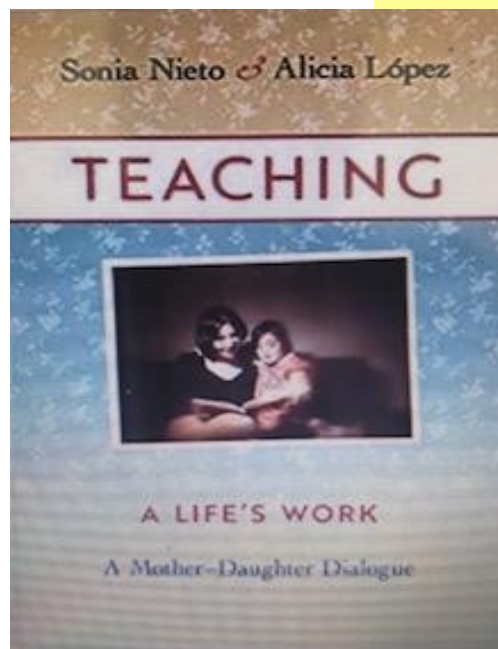
It was a daunting task at first. Fortunately, my mother had been through this process many times and guided me in her confident but gentle manner. She taught me how to lay out the table of contents and work from there. I taught her how to use Google documents, an invaluable tool for this sort of collaboration. Also, years of writing for an audience, through working with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project and blogging, helped me feel comfortable with the thought of writing for a larger audience. We wrote from our own perspectives as teachers/teacher educators, checking in with each other as we wrote.

When we began the process almost two years ago, my mother was still busy speaking at conferences and universities, editing her own series of books, writing forewords for other academics' publications, and more. I was embarking on a two-year stint as a halftime administrator and halftime ELL teacher, and was raising (still am raising), along with my husband, three teenagers. We knew that in order to get chunks of writing done, we had to get away. However, we couldn't be gone for long periods of time, and we couldn't go too far away. We took a series of mini writing retreats, starting in August of 2017 in Brattleboro, Vermont. We fell into a routine: we worked steadily starting early in the morning (though not too early!), stopped for lunch and an afternoon nap, then continued writing until it was time for a pre-dinner drink and an enjoyable dinner. In this manner, we worked our way through the book's chapters in Brattleboro, Hartford, New York City, and the Berkshires. When we were home, we also took long mornings to work at local cafes, or to work at my mother's dining room table. One morning, we sat in her dining room to complete our "talking chapter" (a format popularized in a terrific book by Ira Shor and Paulo Freire in 1987), where we posed questions about education to each other over a cup of *café*

*con leche*, and we recorded our answers, to be transcribed later.

Our book was released in late January of this year. When I received my copy, I was a little numb from disbelief. As someone who loves to write, it was a dream of mine to publish a book one day. I never thought it would be a nonfiction book about education and teaching; I always saw myself as a writer of fiction. It was, nonetheless, a thrilling moment for me. People love to ask me, "What was it like to write with your mom? Did you fight?" I inevitably respond, at the risk of disappointing people, "No - not at all." It's true. We discussed, reflected, questioned, advised, recommended, and edited each other, but we never argued. We're lucky to already have a strong, perhaps unique mother-daughter relationship, and writing a book together only strengthened it.

I was at a conference with my mother last spring, and I attended a session at which she presented along with other "elders" in the academic community, and their views on the future of education. After listening to the speakers in this presentation, I felt humbled. In public education, old ideas are constantly being brought back and touted as new, or completely new ideas and policies are thought up, ostensibly by people who sit in cubicles, and not teachers who are actually in classrooms. Instead, perhaps we should take the time to really listen to our elders, and draw from their collective knowledge and experiences. Writing this book with my mother allowed me to do just that. I learned from her and with her, and in the process, spent much valued time with her - something I will never regret.



## Susan Elia MacNeal—Author

Maggie Hope is a Wellesley Grad, Too

“Maggie Hope is improbable, but certainly not impossible,” I remember saying in a magazine interview. When *Mr. Churchill’s Secretary*, my first novel, was first published in 2012, there was some pushback about the heroine, Maggie Hope. People said she was too smart, too ambitious, too confident for a twenty-something woman in 1940.

I remember responding: “You have to understand that Maggie went to Wellesley, and graduated as a math major, class of 1937. Not only that, but she was raised on campus by her aunt, who was a professor of chemistry. She saw women in positions of academic excellence and leadership from a young age and never stopped to question herself.” In other words, she’d lived in a world that allowed women to be unapologetically intelligent.

People always ask me about how I got the idea to write *Mr. Churchill’s Secretary*, the first novel in what turned out to be a New York Times and Edgar-nominated series about a woman named Maggie Hope and her contributions to the Allied side in World War II. She starts out as, well, Winston Churchill’s secretary, then becomes a secret agent and spy for Britain, battling Nazis on the Homefront and abroad.

I tell this story when I’m on book tour and asked about Maggie’s origin—that thanks to my husband’s work for the Muppets and Bear in the Big Blue House, I was able to spend a lot of time in London. That in London, an English friend gave me a copy of *Time Out London* with the challenge, “You might want to go to the Churchill War Rooms. Despite what you Yanks might think, World War II didn’t start with Pearl Harbor.” That I accepted the challenge and went to the museum, really Churchill and the War Cabinet’s secret underground bunker, located close to Ten Downing Street and protected by thick concrete ceilings to protect against the Blitz. That, walking the same corridors the Prime Minister and his colleagues walked, I was inspired.

But I never talk about the Maggie part of the equation—but here it is. As I was passing the small basement room where the (female) typists worked, I realized my heroine would be one of them. But then I wondered—wouldn’t a woman chafe at only typing? Especially a smart woman, who knew she could offer more? A woman whose value and intelligence was overlooked? And that’s when I realized—for me to make sense of not only Maggie’s ambition, but her certainty that she belonged in the corridors of power—Maggie Hope would have to be a Wellesley woman.

I had a lot of fun adding in details. Maggie grew up on campus in faculty housing with her aunt, a graduate herself of St. Hilda’s at Oxford, who’d warm up dinners on her Bunsen burner in the Science Center. As a student, Maggie lived at Claflin. (Why Claflin? Because of the beautiful Alice in Wonderland carvings in the common area—I always thought of Maggie as an Alice type and her experiences in wartime London as a sort of “Wonderland” a place for the terrible and wonderful and fantastical to happen.)

I’ve also used some Easter eggs, both for my friends and for fellow grads. For instance, if you read *Princess Elizabeth’s Spy*, you’ll hear about a group of ladies-in-waiting who lived in one of the towers of Windsor Castle—loosely drawn from seniors who lived there in 1990 - 1991. I even included Irving (the snake), who belonged to Meredith Norris, ’91, kept illegally on the sixth floor of Tower Court East.

I feel like my time in Wellesley’s English department was well spent (no creative writing major or even classes when I was there). I learned about female novelists from Susan Meyer and Marilyn Sides. And about basically everything else from the late Terry Tyler. (Someone at a reading recently asked how I can allude to so much poetry. “Because I took Terry Tyler’s classes!” I thought.) I studied philosophy of literature with the late Professor Menkiti—and his words still resonate: “Just tell the story. Don’t worry about what it means in the first few drafts. Just tell the story.” I think of him saying that, and his warm, hearty, joyful laugh, often as I write.

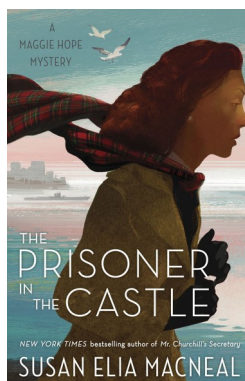
Sometimes people ask me if I was a math genius, like Maggie, and I have to shake my head no. The one class (game theory, what was I thinking?) I took in the math department, I dropped. And my poor science professors—Wendy Hagan Bower in Astronomy comes to mind—were remarkably kind and patient with me. So who inspired this aspect of Maggie Hope? My fellow students, whom I watched with awe and admiration.

When Maggie is insulted by a misogynist in *The Queen’s Accomplice*, I have him call her a “spinster tartlet.” If you remember the class of 1990’s graduation, with former First Lady Barbara Bush as speaker, you may recall a certain journalist named Mike Barnacle from the Boston Globe. He referred to protesting Wellesley grads as such, along with as “chicks,” “girls,” “female persons” and “a pack of whining unshaven feminists.” “I’d like to needlepoint ‘Spinster Tartlet’ on a pillow someday,” Maggie thinks, turning the insult into a compliment and badge of honor, as many of us did.

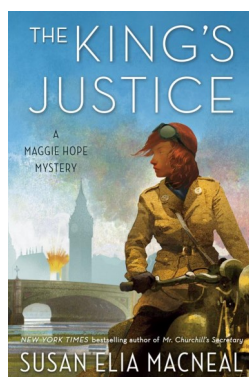
In other words, Maggie Hope is a Wellesley woman, inspired by graduates and professors (and originally based on one particular grad in the class of 1991—not me). I hope her strengths (and weaknesses, for she has them) shine through and make you proud.

I’d like to think that Maggie Hope is one of us.

See these other great titles from our very own Susan Elia MacNeal:



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