



# GREEN LIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DARTMOUTH LGBTQIA+ ALUM ASSOCIATION

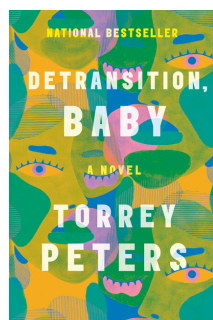
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## VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING A HIT

Dealing with the realities of the pandemic, but also embracing the opportunities for greater breadth and accessibility of programming, DGALA in 2021 launched its most wide-ranging and extensive virtual programs. Those events have proven very popular with DGALA's LGBTQIA+ alums, both in allowing many to participate who otherwise could not have, and in enabling deeper and broader interactions with LGBTQIA+ students and alums. Inside, you will find reports on some of the events already held this year (most of which are accessible via our website [dgala.org](http://dgala.org)), and below are updates on events scheduled for the next two months. Keep an eye on our website for even more events later this year! ❖

### JUNE 15 @ 7PM EDT BOOK EVENT WITH TORREY PETERS GR '13

Torrey Peters is the author of the bestselling novel *Detransition, Baby* (Random House, 2021),



a Roxane Gay's Audacious Book Club Pick. In *Detransition, Baby*, Peters brilliantly and fearlessly navigates the most dangerous taboos around gender, sex, and relationships, gifting us a thrillingly original, witty, and deeply moving novel. Kirkus

Reviews calls the debut, "Smart, funny, and bighearted. Trans women will be matching their experiences against Reese's, but so will cis women—and so will anyone with an interest in the human condition." Torrey will be in conversation with DGALA board member and fabulous mother Sheila Hicks-Rotella '04. Go to [DGALA.org](http://DGALA.org) to get a Zoom link and for a raffle of free copies of the book.

### JUNE 24 @ 7:30 PM EDT DARTMOUTH/DIVERSITY TRIVIA EVENT

Join us for trivia and awesome tunes with your host, David Blum '93, of Great Big Trivia. Each round begins easy and gets progressively more difficult, so whether you're a casual trivia player or seasoned trivia buff there's something for everyone!

We're playing for fun (and PRIDE), but like traditional pub trivia we'll keep score. You'll submit answers via a Google Form and the winner will receive some DGALA swag! And there will be time to socialize afterwards.



*See back page for July event with student!*

# BETH ROBINSON '86 RECOUNTS



On the evening of Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> of this year, DGALA screened online the documentary “The State of Marriage” starring DGALA member Beth Robinson '86. The film tells the gripping story of the battle for marriage equality in Vermont, which extended from the mid-1990s until 2009, with many twists and turns along the way. Following the

screening, Beth joined the Zoom for a chat with DGALA alums moderated by DGALA director (and Beth’s fellow Indiana native) Erik Ochsner '93. An amazing crowd of DGALA members attended the event, many of whom have been active in the field of marriage equality and/or LGBTQIA+ advocacy in general.

Beth recounted during the Zoom how she started as a young attorney in a small-town Vermont law firm, where she and her colleague Susan Murray began to advocate for marriage equality across the state. The idea had its genesis when a Vermont lesbian couple was involved in a car accident in which one of them was killed. Murray had represented the surviving partner in a battle to retain custody of their 3-year-old son, and that case heightened her awareness of the legal vulnerability of same-sex couples. Beth emphasized on the Zoom how telling such personal stories of real people is critical to gaining political support for a controversial issue like marriage equality.

Eventually Beth and Susan, with support from renown LGBTQIA+ advocate Mary Bonauto of Massachusetts, brought suit on behalf of three same-sex Vermont couples seeking affirmation of their right to marriage equality under the Vermont constitution. They achieved a landmark victory before the Vermont Supreme Court in 1999, but the court referred the issue to the Vermont legislature, which legalized civil unions (but not actual marriage) for same-sex couples in April 2000. Yet the matter was far from settled, and Beth acknowledged on the Zoom that her team was unprepared for the political firestorm that followed. Opponents to equality started a “Take Back Vermont” campaign to unseat legislators



Beth Robinson '86 on the Zoom

# MARRIAGE EQUALITY STRUGGLE

who had voted for civil unions, and many lost their seats in the elections that fall. But the opponents never won enough political power to outlaw civil unions. And during the 2000's, Beth and many others slowly built a political consensus in favor of full marriage equality, which was legalized in Vermont in 2009 over the veto of the Republican governor. In 2011, the new Vermont governor, a former Democratic legislator who had gotten to know Beth during the course of the legislative battles over marriage, appointed her as a Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court, an appointment that was unanimously confirmed by the Vermont Senate.



Justice Robinson at Swearing-In Ceremony

Speaking about the event to *Green Light*, Beth said, *"I was struck by the fact that so many people on the Zoom call have done (and are doing) amazing things to make the world a better place. It made me proud to be part of the DGALA community."*

## COMMENTS BY ALUMS

**Hillary Goodridge '78:** *What an inspired evening with DGALA and Justice Robinson! The wonderful film shows some of the incredible, relentless work of the many brave souls who led the way on marriage equality for the nation. We all owe a debt of gratitude to them. Thank you DGALA for bringing us together and shining a light on an amazing Dartmouth hero.*

**Kamil Walji '03:** *What an exceptional chance to learn about a history that is far from over. In our current troubled times when so much is still at stake, Beth provided a reassuring context and confidence to be able to challenge the exasperation and pessimism so many are feeling.*

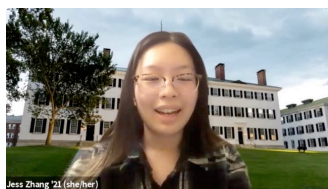
**Susan Harrington '84:** *It's really moving to see the intense personal work over so much time that goes into these moments. Grateful for all of it!"*

**Bob Cohn '66:** *Amazing film..... I was almost in tears at the end. A Herculean long-time effort by Beth that has taken major social change from Vermont to the entire country! ❖*



# DGALA/DCF SCHOLARS

On May 5 at 5PM DGALA partnered with the Dartmouth College Fund to hold a Zoom Q&A with two of this year's DGALA/DCF Scholars, Colin Goodbred '21 and Jessica Zhang '21. Colin is a Quantitative Social Science major from Brentwood, Tennessee, and Jessica, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, majored in Linguistics. They are recipients of two of this year's DGALA/DCF need-based scholarships. (See page 8 for how you can support more Scholars.)



The Q&A was moderated by DGALA President Mel Pastuck '11. Each student gave a 6-minute presentation (with photos) of their lives at Dartmouth and beyond, followed by discussions with the alums on the Zoom.

## Jess on the Zoom

Jess focused on two of her major activities at Dartmouth, the first as Social Chair of Phi Tau, a gender-inclusive Greek house on North Main Street. Jess described how, in the midst of the pandemic, she led organization of a variety of events, both virtual and in-person.



## Jewelry by Jess

Jess also reported on an independent project that she did this year at the jewelry workshop at the Hop.



Phi Tau Dumpling Making

Colin described three of his most significant undertakings, both at and away from Dartmouth. First he told of how, as a transgender man then presenting as a woman in high school, he avoided sports, but at Dartmouth he took up running during his sophomore year, later joining Dartmouth's co-ed triathlon team and eventually becoming a captain of the team this year. Colin next recounted his advocacy initiative, along with other Dartmouth



transgender students, to (successfully!) testify against a bill in the New Hampshire legislature that would ban transgender women students from participating on women's teams. Finally, Colin described how (partly as a result of discussions at a College philosophy course) he came to donate a kidney to a stranger during his off term amidst the pandemic.

Both Jess and Colin spoke about the significance to them of the DGALA/DCF Scholars

# MEET ALUMS

program. Jess described how, in addition to simply enabling her to afford to come to Dartmouth, the DGALA/DCF program had a special meaning to her *“just in terms of being able to connect to this [LGBTQ+] community and also helping me to embrace my own identity. I went to an all-girls school in high school where ... I definitely had some unpleasant interactions with people at the school. And I think that, since I've come to Dartmouth I've been able to just grow more comfortable with my own identity and interact with LGBTQ+ spaces, without this fear of “Oh, what if someone says something about it, or if what if they think that I'm a certain way because of who I am.” And so having this opportunity of being recognized as a Scholar just really helped me reaffirm like how far I've come in terms of just embracing my identity and finding a space.”*



**Colin with His Mom, Donee  
and Donee's Wife**

Colin added, *“Knowing that I was going to have the financial aid that I needed really gave me a lot more confidence in applying to Dartmouth.... And I definitely think that there's something special about knowing that that support is coming from other LGBT people who may have had great experiences at Dartmouth, or may not have, but either way are interested in supporting future students who are hopefully continuing to slowly make changes and slowly make Dartmouth, a better place for other queer people.”*

## COMMENTS BY ALUMS

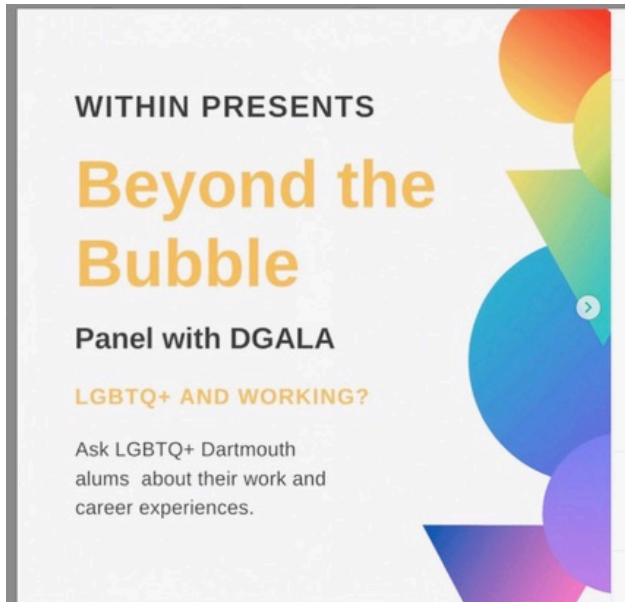
*It's always great to see and hear from students. Both of these students and their "stories" were exceptional. They were interesting, poised and thoughtful. It's awesome that they have sufficient support, financial and emotional, that they can focus their energies on exploring their passions....They inspired me to strive to be my best self. And I thank you for blessing us with the opportunity to meet them!*

*Alumni are very interested in what students are doing and it's a great way to feel connected to the college and see who benefits from our connections. Also great opportunity to have some conversations with students.*

*Great to connect with students – who shared very powerful, LGBTQ+ specific stories, as well as other alums. It felt very personal and very DGALA. ❖*

# STUDENT/ALUM

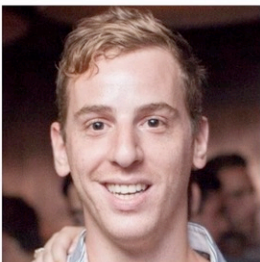
On May 13 at 7PM DGALA partnered with the student LGBTQIA+ group Within to present via Zoom a career panel at which students could hear from alums regarding their experiences as LGBTQIA+ people in their varied workplaces. The panelists were chosen based upon requests from students regarding their areas of interest. Besides those depicted in the images on this and the next page, panelists also included former DGALA



President Brendan Connell '87, COO and General Counsel of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in LA, and current DGALA Vice President Lee Merkle-Raymond '86, Sr. Managing Director, Risk, at Hercules Capital, Inc.

The event was well attended by students, who asked meaningful questions, such as “What was your path to your current career?”, “How has your LGBTQIA+ identity affected your career?”, and “How do you maintain a work/life balance?” Comments from the panelists included “It is always better when you present your true self in your professional career”; “Progress on a career is

more like a jungle gym that a straight ladder”; “Don't compare yourself to the 'stars' in your class – your career is a long haul; it will have up's and down's” and “Do what you love!”. Rebecca Perkins Kwoka '04 described how she is very up front as an elected official about her non-traditional family. Networking was discussed, with some noting that fellow DGALA alums can be positive contacts.



Spenser Mestel '11

Journalist, freelance writer, voting rights blogger

For Within, the event was coordinated by **Chloe Fugle '23**, who commented to *Green Light*: “Thank you to all of our wonderful panelists for coming to share their experiences and advice with us! It was so inspiring to hear of the courage the panelists had standing up for themselves and the LGBTQ+ community at Dartmouth and at work. We look forward to continued connection with DGALA -- intergenerational LGBTQ+ mentorship would be invaluable to current students.”

Chloe also passed along comments from other students who attended:

# CAREER PANEL

*"It's inspiring to know the many different paths LGBTQ+ folks have traveled since leaving Dartmouth. It's also so encouraging to know the world outside the college bubble is reportedly becoming more accepting with time. Thank you to the panelist who helped make the event possible!" - Olivia Goodwin '21*

*"It was incredibly valuable to share a space with queer elders who could speak to how things have changed in their own lives, with Dartmouth, and in the world. Each panelist really gave me a sense that things are getting better even in the past year. It left me feeling really hopeful that there is a future that includes me."*  
-Farrar Ransom '23

*"Even when we feel surrounded by invaluable peer allyship, intergenerational mentorship and guidance can often feel harder to come by - so realizing that these alumni are here for us and feel so happy to give us their time was an incredibly special*



Erik Ochsner '94  
Music Director for SONOS  
Chamber Orchestra in NYC

*feeling, and I learned so much from their resilience to apply to my own life! It's also very special and empowering to both realize the history of, and directly connect with, the roots of some of the first out Dartmouth LGBTQ+ community members, or as they described each other, the "pioneers" of DGALA. It's valuable to contextualize our current battles with an appreciation of the bravery of those that came before us, and also appreciate all of the progress we've made together!"* - Diana Vizza '20

A recording of the panel is available at:  
<https://dartmouth.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=1e55e13f-420f-4d66-87ad-ad28000ddd95> (This link, and links for other programs in this issue, will be available on our website, DGALA.org.) ❖



Rebecca Perkins  
Kwoka '04  
Recently elected State Senator of  
New Hampshire



Emily Hicks-Rotella  
Nonprofit Data and Tech  
Strategist



## JULY VIRTUAL EVENT



Olivia

Join us on Tuesday, July 13 at 7PM EDT for a presentation by Olivia Goodwin '21 of their senior thesis "COVID-19 and the LGBTQ+

Dartmouth Undergraduate."

Olivia will present their survey- and field-based research regarding how LGBTQ+ students used their social networks to cope with stressors during the pandemic. A registration link will be up on our website well before the event. ❖

## SUPPORT DGALA/DCF SCHOLARS

Inside this *Green Light*, you met two of this year's DGALA/DCF Scholars. DGALA's collaboration with the DCF is now fourteen years old – for every \$50,000 that DGALA members give to the DCF during the current fiscal year (ending June 30), one new Scholar will be funded for a full year beginning in September. At last count this year we had already funded four Scholars and were close to a fifth. (The DCF kindly rounds up each time we cross a \$50,000 threshold.) So if you have not yet given to the DCF this year, please do so to support more amazing LGBTQIA+ students like Jessica and Colin. If you received this newsletter, you are counted as among DGALA's ranks and so your gift will automatically help to support the program. Just go to:

<http://www.dartmouthcollegefund.org>.

## DGALA WANTS YOU!

Possibly interested in getting more involved in DGALA? We'd love to have you! It's a great way to deepen your connections with the Dartmouth LGBTQIA+ community as well as with other Dartmouth communities and to help to bring us all closer together. No huge time demands are required! Possible roles include serving as regional outreach coordinators for your local geographic area, serving as our liaison to College communities that may interest you, writing for the *Green Light* or our website, serving on our board of directors, hosting and co-hosting events, doing social media and communications, recruiting members, doing advocacy work for the College and beyond. If you might be interested, do drop us a message at [DartGALA@gmail.com](mailto:DartGALA@gmail.com)!

## NOTES

The Dartmouth College Fund's latest vlog features Caris '23 speaking about queer life on campus. Check it out at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxLmVWY3-7c&t=2s>

ML Dumars, spouse of DGALA member Debra Roberson '89, has published a new lesbian romance, "Any Given Tuesday." Debra and ML live in Shreveport, Louisiana. ❖

