

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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Rupp grants degrees to 8,000 graduates

By **KIM VAN DUZER**
Spectator Summer Board

The popping of champagne corks marked the end of Columbia's 242nd academic year as University President George Rupp conferred degrees on the class of 1996 at last Wednesday's University-wide commencement exercises.

In addition to the more than 8,000 students from Columbia's 15 schools and two affiliated institutions who received their degrees at the ceremony, honorary degrees and the University Medal for Excellence were presented to nine scholars and professionals from a variety of different fields.

This year's commencement exercises also marked the first annual presentation of teaching awards to five distinguished members of Columbia's faculty for what Rupp called their "absolutely critical contributions to the life of Columbia."

The Reverend Faith Carmichael delivered the invocation for the ceremony, focusing on the need for diversity and unity in both Columbia's student body and the world.

"We understand what divides us, but need to know more about what unites us," Carmichael said.

In his commencement address, Rupp urged graduates to recognize the necessity of "serving the common good" and striving to achieve this end in all of their future endeavors.

"As you commence you will be thinking about individual challenges," Rupp said. "But even as you pursue these challenges, we count on you to pursue not only the individual but the common good. In that quest, we wish you all of the best for all of our sake."

University Provost Jonathan Cole presented the University Medal for Excellence to Helene D. Gayle, Director of the National Center for

HIV, STDs, and TB at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a Barnard College alumna, calling Gayle “a powerful force in preventing disease through unyielding efforts to connect social and economic conditions to the health of populations.”

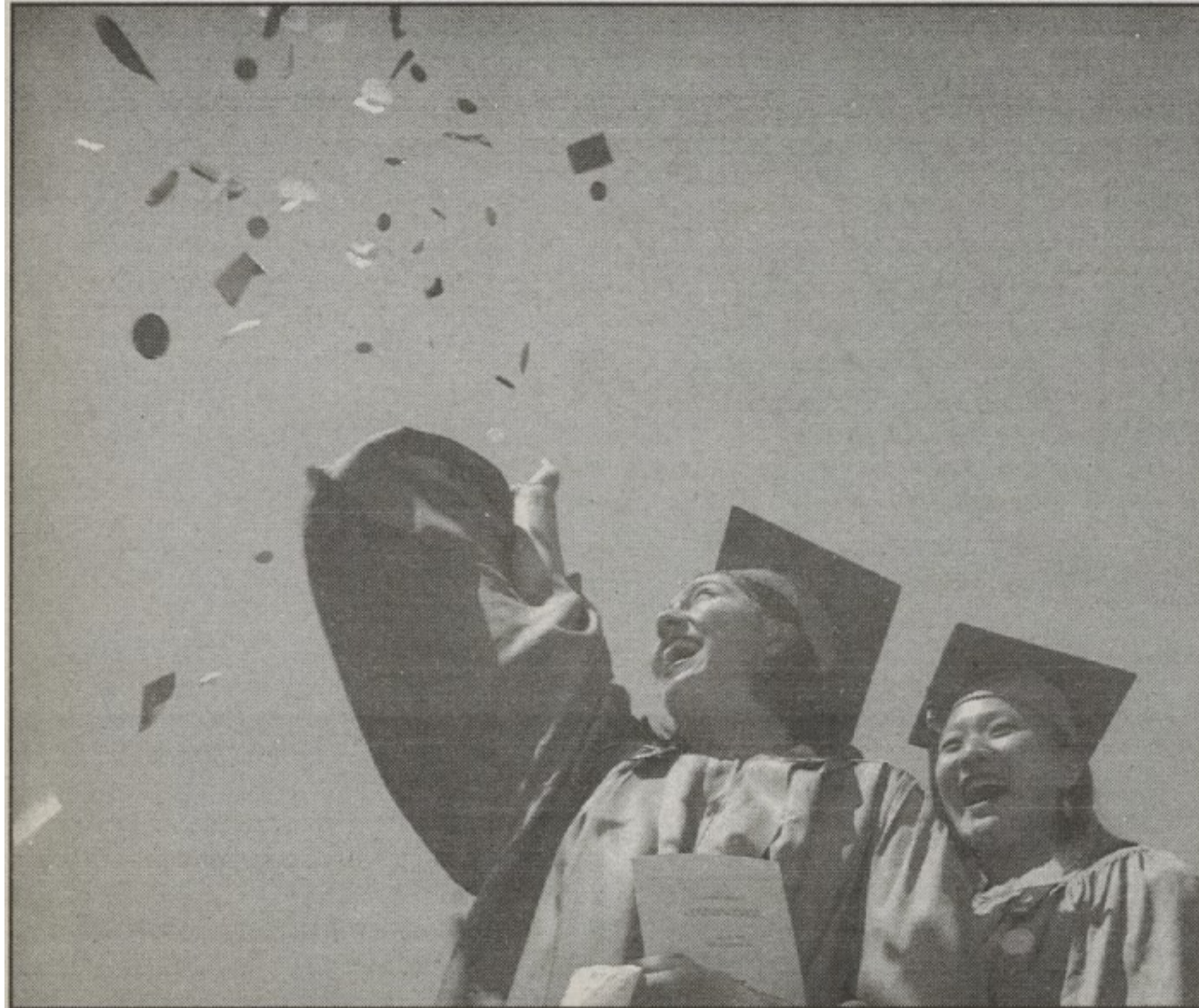
Cole also presented honorary degrees to Franz Rosenthal, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Languages at Yale University; Mark O. Hatfield, U.S. Senator from Oregon; Andrei Kozyrev, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia; Sadako Ogata, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees; Wynton Marsalis, composer and musician; Irwin D. Mandel, international dentistry expert and professor emeritus at the School of Dental and Oral Surgery; and Edward Witten, a mathematical physicist at Princeton University’s Institute for Advanced Study.

Rupp presented the first annual Presidential Awards for Outstanding Teaching to Professor and Chair of the Department of Italian Teodolinda Barolini, Director of Undergraduate Programs and Laboratory Operations and adjunct professor in the Department of Physics Allan S. Blaer, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine Herbert Chase Jr., Professor of History James Shenton, and Lionel Trilling Professor in the Humanities Edward Tayler.

Following the presentation of awards, the deans of each school presented the individual graduating classes for the conferring of degrees, each dean reminding graduates of the “rights, privileges, and responsibilities” attached to their Columbia degrees.

Rabbi James Rosenberg, CC '66, delivered the benediction, stressing both the unity and diversity of Columbia graduates.

“We are united in an ongoing quest for educational excellence, and united in the conviction that it is within our own minds, hands, and hearts to repair the brokenness of our world,” Rosenberg said. “We are one human family in search of a better tomorrow.”



SUMMER PHOTO EDITOR—DAMON WINTER

Barnard graduates threw confetti and academic cares into the air at the University-wide commencement exercises last Wednesday.