As college progresses, Jennings concurs, “these students are disadvantaged in two ways: their understanding of career paths can be limited and they do not have a network of professionals [to call on]. We are hoping these mentors can guide students and make up that gap.”

For Luis Ubiñas, whose son is applying to Harvard this year, the goal is much less about changing others’ views of the “invisible minority” or increasing external support services. “I would like a narrative to be established in the minds of these students that there is something special about being the first person in your family to go to college, to Harvard, and you should not let it pass,” he says. He maintains that the financial aid he received from Harvard and other institutions is a form of trust that he took very seriously and that he has worked harder in light of it.

“There will always be undergraduates with more or less money in their wallets, but there is nothing Harvard can do to control that,” he concludes. “And there was value in my having an empty wallet. It reminded me that I had a different purpose, to create a different future for my family and myself. Being there did not mean I had arrived, it meant I had a bridge to go somewhere else.”

He wants first-gen students to fully absorb the fact that “the College can accept anyone in the country and it chose you. But then it is your job to make the most of it.”

—NELL PORTER BROWN

HAA Award Winners

Established in 1990, the Harvard Alumni Association Awards recognize outstanding service to the University. This year’s awards are to be presented on September 27 during the HAA board of directors’ fall meeting.

Teresita Alvarez-Bjelland ’76, M.B.A. ’79, of Oslo, has held numerous positions in the HAA, including president, vice president of University-wide affairs, treasurer, and elected director. She is a class marshal, and has received both the Hiram S. Hunn and the Radcliffe Distinguished Service Awards.

F. Gorham Brigham ’37, M.B.A. ’39, of West Newton, Massachusetts, has served as Harvard Business School (HBS) class secretary for more than 73 years and is acting secretary for his College class, which he served as treasurer for six decades. He is a former president of the HBS Club of Boston and earlier this year won the inaugural HBS Volunteer Service Award.

Deborah Gelin ’79, M.B.A. ’83, of Washington, D.C., was president of the Harvard Club of Washington, D.C., and served as HAA regional director of the Middle Atlantic states. She is also a past recipient of the Hiram S. Hunn Award.

Joseph K. Hurd Jr. ’60, M.D. ’64, of Wellesley, Massachusetts, is a class marshal and a former HAA elected director. He has also been president of the Harvard Medical School alumni association and an appointed director of the alumni council.

John Paul Kennedy ’63, of Salt Lake City, has interviewed candidates since 1966 and has been chair of the Utah schools and scholarships committee. He now serves as an HAA director for the cluster of religious identity shared interest groups (SIGs).

Michael G. Yamin ’53, L.L.B. ’58, of New York City, is a 50-year member of the Harvard Club of New York City, having served twice on its board of managers, most recently as vice president. He has been an alumni interviewer since 1958.

Hiram Hunn Awards

Seven alumni are to receive Hiram S. Hunn Memorial Schools and Scholarships Awards, presented by the Harvard College Office of Admissions and Financial Aid at a ceremony in Cambridge on September 28. The awards’ namesake, the late Hiram Hunn ’21, recruited prospective undergraduates for more than 55 years.

Stephen W. Baird ’74, of Chicago, has been an interviewer since the early 1980s, served as co-chair of the local Harvard schools committee since 2002, and is the former chair of the HAA’s national schools and scholarships committee.

Deborah Kaufman Goldfine ’85, of Newton, Massachusetts, has interviewed applicants for 22 years and co-chairs the Harvard schools committee in Newton.

Stacie J. Kerrigan ’81, of York Beach, Maine, chairs the schools committee in charge of students at Phillips Exeter Academy and conducts interviews in the Southern Maine region.

Ralph A. Mariani ’70, of King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, has chaired the Harvard schools committee in Philadelphia for 15 years. He first began interviewing students in 1978.

Daniel A. Medina ’79, M.B.A. ’83, of San Marino, California, is a longtime interviewer appointed this year as vice president of the Harvard Club of Southern California’s schools committee.

Paul E. Thornton ’67, of Newark, New Jersey, has interviewed students for more than 40 years and served as chair of the Harvard Club of New Jersey’s schools committee in the 1980s.

Stephen C. Trivers ’61, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, is a longtime member of the Harvard Club of West Michigan and began interviewing candidates in 1972.