

Dana Lauren
Roper Fleming

2001

Lawyer/Mom/
Tiger

NORTH JERSEY. 1996. I'm working on my application at the kitchen table. On a typewriter. Pa knows a janitor at Princeton who can be my "legacy". Gram hopes I'll find a husband there.

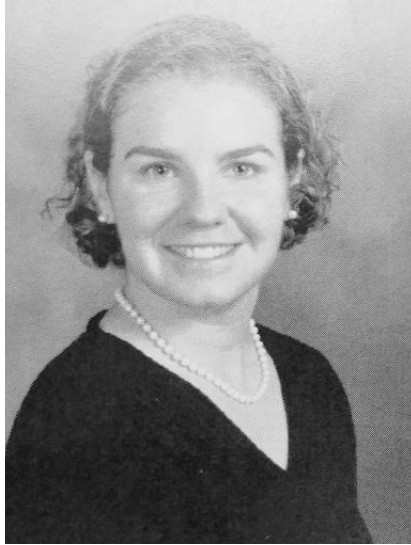
I didn't...
...I did.

Years later, do you think anything would be different, if you'd gone to Rutgers? The silent implication of the lost free-ride, screaming across decades of low interest rates.

RUTGERS MULTIVERSE 2015. I'm probably still doing the same thing (Lawyer/Mom) with the same modicum of success (Moderate/Mostly). I'm probably still trying to lose weight (Without Success). Maybe I buy less orange?

Whatever chartreuse I'm wearing, I am not me. Princeton made the world big for me. And once the world is made big, you cannot be a big shot in it. Only humble, bemused and grateful to be in the company of the brilliance of others. I got to ask Walter Cronkite a question in my Humanities class. I watched my roommate play ice hockey with a degree of precision that I will never achieve in anything I ever do. Ever. I wrote for the Prince. I met the then-president of the United States. I climbed into TI through the window of the men's bathroom. I saw things you can't unsee.

PRINCETON MULTIVERSE 2019. I wear orange. I think about success not in terms of dollars but in terms of impact. I carry the privilege of going to Princeton with me every day. I know who I am (a Tiger) and that I am enough (Always).



Tracy Solomon
Dowling

2005

Professor/Parent/
Feminist

I was challenged, motivated and given opportunities at Princeton I never thought possible. The learning environment was superior, but it was the personal leadership opportunities outside the classroom that left the greatest impact on me.

Freshman fall I signed up to learn to play squash at Dillon gym where, unexpectedly, the teacher for the class was the assistant coach for the women's varsity squash team. After class, he asked me if I was interested in putting in extra effort to learn squash and to potentially join the women's team. I accepted this incredible, unforeseen opportunity, and began playing squash twice a day for the remainder of my freshman year. By the end of the next year, I had risen from number 25 – last place on the team - to a member of the top 16 travelling team. I developed life-long friendships and incredible mentors in my coaches, Richard and Gail.

Another opportunity arose when I decided, after joining Colonial Club, to apply for a junior officer position there. Enjoying leadership at Colonial, I decided next to run for president. I became the second female president in Colonial's history and one of only a handful at any club. This role gave me the opportunity to work closely with the University's administration as it contemplated how four-year colleges could interact with the "Street" and positively influence the University/Street relationship.

Thanks to Princeton, I had the confidence and opportunities to take risks and make a positive impact on my community.



Ronee Penoi

2007

Creative Producer/
Advocate

I remember how much I craved community.

In my classes, there was always an even playing field across gender. Whether in music, theater, or East Asian studies, I belonged. I knew the rules, and when I spoke, I was heard. My professors were encouraging, and gave constructive criticism. They showed up for me inside and outside the classroom- whether attending a performance I directed with PUP or attending my Vocal Performance certificate concert.

Outside the classroom was different. The dominant culture of Prospect street was very loud, white, and gendered, and it liked to party. I joined the nearly 80% of my class in finding my social home there. While there were many happy moments, I never felt like my full, holistic self found its community at Princeton. My way of being a woman didn't have a home there yet. My artistic self and my intellectual self found their communities - but my full self never did.

Years later I know that I'm not alone - many of my friends felt pressured to stay in the closet, drink too much, or use their looks or social status to bicker for a more elite eating club. In 2003-2007, women could be bold, and they were welcome - but for me, it wasn't possible yet to be imperfect, to be vulnerable, or to be too different.