

00s | *a shaft of light*, a collection of poetry by author and poet **Ann Huang** ('00), was published in August. Three other collections of her poetry have also been published. **Daniel Jason** (MBA '01) was promoted to director of benefits at Virginia Commonwealth University, a public research university in Richmond, VA, comprising 11 schools and three colleges. In July the Cayman Islands Ministry of Commerce, Planning, and Infrastructure appointed **Alethia Lambert** (MA '03) its communications and public affairs manager. She has more than 12 years of experience in corporate communications, public relations, and social media management. **Tiffani Blake** (MS '05) joined New York Institute of Technology as interim dean of students for the institution's two NY campuses. *Forbes* ran a profile of **Brandon Voss** (MBA '05), whose creative agency, Voss Events, rose to prominence when it hosted events as part of the TV show *RuPaul's Drag Race*. National Investor Relations Institute honored **Matthew Abenante** ('06) as part of its inaugural "40 Under 40" recognition class, honoring "the most talented young individuals in the investor relations community." He serves as senior vice president at Porter, LeVay & Rose. **Darnide Cayo** ('06, MA '10), a former Baruch adjunct professor, received Con Edison's 2019 Living Our Values Award, Con Edison's highest honor for employees. She serves as a senior specialist. **Colin Horsford** ('07) developed his third app, CurbGenie, which lets travelers return their rental car at airports curbside. After an accounting career at Ernst & Young, AIG, and Goldman Sachs, Horsford now has his own accounting and advisory firm, Horsford Accounting & Advisory. Actress **Celia Au** ('08) stars in the Netflix action series *Wu Assassins*, which blends martial arts, drama, and supernatural elements. Additionally, Au has had roles in the AMC series *Lodge 49* and the indie film *In a New York Minute*. **Nicole Daignault** (MBA '08) married Jeff Brown in June in

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From the Bronx to the Dojo: The Samurai Journey of Taum Dell'Armo

How does a high-powered advertising executive find inner peace? For alumnus Taum Dell'Armo ('69), the answer lies in the way of the samurai.

The Bronx-born Dell'Armo—whose first name, "Taum," is based on a Sanskrit holy word and is pronounced just like his given name, "Tom"—is trained in five martial arts and has been studying *iaido*, an intricate Japanese sword art, for the last 12 years.

Of *iaido*, he says, "You draw the sword, make the cut, and ceremoniously sheath it. It couldn't look simpler, yet it's the most complex and spiritual of all the martial arts." Westerners are rarely trained in *iaido* because it requires experience with other martial arts and, according to Mr. Dell'Armo, demands a lifetime of dedication to searching for spiritual perfection through the samurai sword.

"People in the East laugh at our Chuck Norris, strip mall-style dojos," says Dell'Armo, who now proudly resides in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. "Everyone here just wants a black belt. But, as they say in the East, 'The end is nothing; the road is everything.'"

Today Dell'Armo's mission is to share the artistry of *iaido* with a wider community. In addition to lecturing on samurai history, technique, and art, he has also started a special project he calls "The 8 Samurai, the most exclusive art club in the world." Over the next decade, he will commission the top eight swordsmiths in Japan to create a custom series for eight select clients, each sword set with genuine, antique samurai fittings. "Quite a challenge," he says.

Dell'Armo's samurai journey has been a winding one. After graduating from Baruch, he joined the Air Force, which he credits with opening his eyes to the world outside of New York City. Years later he traveled across the country in a van, meeting friendly strangers along the way, and finally settled down in California, where he landed a job as senior vice president of West Coast operations at Ogilvy & Mather.

Although technically retired, Dell'Armo keeps busy with the 8 Samurai project and volunteering with several nonprofits, working primarily with children. "People all across the country have been so nice to me throughout my life," he says, "and I used to ask them, 'How can I repay you?' They'd say, 'Just pay it forward.' So that's what I'm trying to do."

—GREGORY M. LEPORATI

