

# Davenport unveils dining hall portrait

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A portrait of nine diverse members of the Davenport College community was unveiled on Friday, a result of the college's push to widen the range of people represented along its walls.

Davenport installed the two-panel portrait, which depicts various members of the Davenport community in the college's dining hall, in honor of Richard Schottenfeld '71 MED '76, who served as the college's head between 2001 and 2017.

Schottenfeld chose New York-based artist Brenda Zlamany to create the portrait, after noticing her previous commission — a portrait of the first seven women to receive doctorates at Yale — in Sterling Memorial Library. In commissioning the portrait, Schottenfeld sought to bring together in one portrait people of different genders, races, socioeconomic classes and roles within the college community.

"They're beautiful," Schottenfeld said of the completed panels. "They will encourage strangers to dream and do."

The nine people represented in the portrait are Markus Jackson '09, Jarrad

Aguirre '09 and Angelina Calderón '10, all Davenport alumni; Kang-I Chang, a professor of East Asian languages and literatures; Glaston Dubois, who works as a custodian in Davenport; the recently deceased Carolyn Haller, who worked as the college's operations manager; history professor Paul Kennedy; Joanne Ursine, who works in the Davenport dining hall; and Schottenfeld himself.

Zlamany began working on the portrait last September, staging photo shoots with each of the nine subjects. Although she said a work of this size and scope would usually take her double the time to create, she completed the final oil painting over the course of three months so that the portrait could be unveiled this semester.

"This is the hardest job I've ever worked on," Zlamany said. "I had to work 12 hours a day, seven days a week."

Regardless, Zlamany said she is proud of her work and hopes it will help more people "feel valued" at Yale.

Friday's unveiling was attended by community members as diverse as those represented in the new portraits, from students to staff to alumni. Susan Lustman Katz, the daughter of Seymour and Katharine Lustman, who both served as master of Davenport, said she has known Schottenfeld since he was a first year at Yale and that the portrait is a "wonderful visual representation of what he was like as a person."

Shirley Lawrence, who often works behind the cashier at dinnertime, said the portrait is "vibrant" and "brings flavor to the dining hall."

"It feels real to me, because this is what I see here," Lawrence said. "I work with people from diverse backgrounds."

Zlamany's painting is the second portrait to be unveiled in Davenport through the efforts of the Davenport Walls Project Committee, a group of students charged with improving the diversity of the college's portraits. The first was a portrait of Otelia Cromwell '26, the first African-American woman to earn a doctorate at Yale, which was created by Davenport Graduate Affiliate Kenturah Davis ART '18 and unveiled on Feb. 26.

Like Zlamany, Davis began working in the fall after receiving a commission from Davenport. The portrait is a mixed media creation, with embossed elements, silk collage and, most strikingly, Cromwell's own words.

Creating an image from words was not new to Davis, who has created multiple portraits in this style over the past few years. For the Davenport

portrait, Davis chose a photo of Cromwell that she found “beautiful but also stoic” and that “conveyed a part of her personhood.” She found the text — a letter between Cromwell and her father that discussed her time at Yale and what her family meant to her — in a book published by Cromwell’s niece. Over the course of two months, Davis wrote and rewrote the letter to form an image of Cromwell — then added the embossing and silk.

“I want it to compel someone to slow down their looking and become curious about who this woman is,” Davis said.

Moving forward, the Davenport Walls Project Committee is working on a new initiative called the “Davenport Inspires” project — an effort to display photographs of recent Davenport alumni in the common room on a rotating cycle of between one and three years and later archiving them on the college website.

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