

Milken Alumni Scholars at 2023 Milken Institute Global Conference: Reflections

Jenny Tsang-Quinn, MS '89

The 2023 Milken Institute Global Conference was extraordinary. As this was the first time that I was able to participate at the Global Conference, I didn't know what to expect. Reviewing all the scheduled sessions and the biographies of the speakers before leaving for Los Angeles had my mind spinning; there were so many interesting topics and speakers, and so little time! On May 1, in the first session that I attended, *Advancing a Thriving Future in Health*, I was inspired by the speakers who talked about investments that have led to longer and healthier lives for people all over the world. As someone who works in strengthening the primary care infrastructure for communities in New York City, especially those with poor access to care, the session reinforced my commitment in this field and made me consider additional ways through which to engage my patients around health and wellness.

In addition to listening in on other sessions on health and biotech, which were all interesting, I found my way to sessions where I would learn lots – sessions on industries outside of healthcare. I heard finance leaders and venture capitalists talk about the latest trends and challenges in their world. I learned new words and concepts. Luckily, there were Milken Scholars in a range of fields and industries who were nearby and who could translate the information for me!

For the session in which Evelyn and I had an opportunity to talk about our experiences with the Milken Scholars Program, I was thrilled to share how participation in this program has shaped my life. I wished I had hours to talk about the many key milestones in my life and career which included the Milken Scholars and the Milken Scholars Program. From high school through medical school, from my wedding to the birth of my three children, from my first shadowing experience to my offering shadowing experiences to young people who are interested in medicine and healthcare, from my first job after I started college at the Center for Educational Programs to my current job, there have been so many decisions and experiences that have included a conversation with a Milken Scholar Program leader or Milken Scholar.

As always, catching up with the Milken Scholars was rejuvenating. They never fail to motivate me to consider more, to do more. How lucky am I that I get to be a part of this family!

Many thanks to Mike and Lori, and Evelyn and Jane for inviting me to my first Milken Institute Global Conference. I'm still processing the sights, sounds, conversations, and the vast amount of new knowledge that I acquired at the Global Conference. I look forward to figuring out how to apply what I learned in my efforts to improve the healthcare delivery system.

Tulani Thomas, MS '94

My favorite session was Home Free: A Conversation with John Legend on the Path to Reentry After Incarceration. This session was amazing because the panelists were passionate and the topic was one that is relatable to everyone. I learned from this panel how restrictive formerly incarcerated people's lives are once they are released. One of the panelists, Sheena Meade, shared her astounding story of bouncing a check and then not qualifying for rental apartments over five years later. It was inspiring to

hear how she turned her experience to a national organization making a significant impact. It was interesting to hear that this is a bipartisan effort, with Democrats often speaking about it as a justice issue and Republicans as an issue with the government intervening in the citizens' lives. It's great that through bipartisan effort, states are changing their laws to be less restrictive for formerly incarcerated people in the voting spaces. The organization Slack for Good sharing that they have had a 100% success rate in placing formerly incarcerated people in tech companies was impressive. It supports the idea that a chance is often all that we need but is often denied especially to this group of people. I hope that both speakers are invited to speak to the Milken Scholars at our Summit or Symposium.

I met a ton of people at the conference. It was quite overwhelming. I literally met people in the lady's room. The energy was electric and everyone was excited to be there. One person I met at the conference was Alexis Ohanian. He was on the panel, The Challenges of Manhood in Today's America. He was very grounded and open with his personal challenges of fatherhood and changing the perspective and ideologies of manhood within his own company and personally. I was appreciative of how he stayed and spoke to everyone after the panel, shared his contact information and was genuinely interested in hearing about the Milken Scholar program. I shared with him my goal of creating an animation series that teaches children about eco-friendly living and he suggested that I email him. His VC fund looks to support companies that are focused on double bottom line. Hopefully we will be able to connect. I know he is busy and shared that he is expecting his second child soon.

Sherrese Soares was on the Content is Queen panel with Issa Rae. She was very impressive and showed how her investment strategy being driven by data has directed her fund to invest in unique music catalogs that have shown to yield great returns. We connected because we live in close proximity to each other and her company is focused on the revitalization of Newark. I attend church in Newark. We have connected and she has offered to make introductions to people in animation and who can be of assistance. Funny how I had to go to Los Angeles to meet a fellow neighbor. That's the beauty of the Global Milken Conference, you will interact with everyone from world renowned scientists and authors and sometimes old friends or neighbors all who are trying to make an impact on the world, like yourself.

The theme of the conference this year was Advancing a Thriving World. My takeaway from the conference is that there is hope. I am hopeful that we will thrive as a world because we are paying more attention to the important areas of food, climate, youth, education, and health. We are not only preoccupied with the financial markets but, equally if not more, with the mental, emotional and physical health of our people since it starts with the individual. I was impressed how leaders in all industries were taking this into consideration. The presence of such a robust wellness garden exemplifies what is needed to advance a thriving world...overall wellness.

Judit Tejada, MS '92

What was your favorite session and why?

This is akin to asking which child is your favorite (smile!). I loved every session I attended but for different reasons. However, one of my favorites was "Healthcare of the future – Part 1: Governing America: A conversation with Hawaii Governor Josh Green." Governor Green was a physician and was inspiring: he helped "Kauhale" communities to get unsheltered veterans, kūpuna, and others into safe housing options and discussed how he was able to obtain bipartisan support for this and other similar initiatives. He has great examples of how one can tackle healthcare's cost problem!

Who were two people that you met for the first time and what came out of that conversation/meeting?

#1 At the puppy corner, I met Julia Mattox who works for Capricorn Investment Group in New York. As she took pictures of me at the puppy corner, it turns out that her father recently passed away and had been battling Cancer at the hospital I work at: Moffitt Cancer Center. She spoke so highly of the care he received at Moffitt – I was so moved and left with a clear understanding of why I have been at Moffitt for 15 years: we truly serve as a beacon of hope to beat Cancer. Her mother still lives in Tampa and she attended the same school as my daughter does so we promised to zoom each other until we meet in person again.

#2 Sandrine Miller-Montgomery, President & CEO of Micronoma. Dr. Miller's company, based in San Diego, focuses on microbiome driven liquid biopsy. Multi Cancer Early Detection technology (also known as liquid biopsies) is poised to change the oncology industry and, one of the key disruptors I have been following these past three years. We plan to zoom so that I can learn more about her company and connect her with Moffitt Cancer Center researchers.

What was a main takeaway from GC23 and its impact on your professional and personal life?

Professionally: Inspiration, ideas and collaborators can come from any industry! The Milken Global Conference is the only conference I know that can effectively bring leaders together from all industries and tackle/debate large complex problems and generate ideas. I just don't get this kind of "conference" experience at any healthcare conference (large or small).

Personally: Healthcare (and for that matter Cancer) is truly at a crossroads which means that I am in the great role at Moffitt Cancer Center: I focus on the future and its implications for the center. The need for foresight intelligence and individuals who can collaborate across industries is a skill that I should continue to develop. The Milken Institute provided me with a unique opportunity to not only develop the skills but also to meet influential healthcare leaders who are actually directing where the healthcare puck is going! Thank you, Mr. Milken, for this incredible opportunity!

Serge Sverdlov, MS '97

Despite shaking off some of the Covid era gloom, this Global Conference had a distinctly ominous feel. The energy, the sunshine, the glamour of the setting, and the puppies set an upbeat tone (and, yes, puppy playtime was an epic addition and sure to be part of the conference's legend; the only way to take it to the next level is to bring in capybaras). But, alas, listening to some of the keynote panels, many of the predictions did not match the mood. Apparently, we are all doomed economically for a while, in part because the multiple parts of the global financial system worked surprisingly effectively to cushion the Covid era economic impact, and the bill for public spending and private overinvestment is coming due. Additionally, we are all doomed, for an indefinite period of time, by the dislocations in every profession and market due to the AI revolution. But that is an exciting kind of doom, a doom with opportunities, and perhaps our new AI overlords will condescend to solve some of our molecular design problems and permit us to live longer.

The standout panel? Reid Hoffman and Eric Schmidt on AI. Now I'm a huge Reid Hoffman fan, and like to think I resemble him not only in appearance but in style of thought and speech characterized by overly precise statements and definition nitpicking and meta-statements about statements (something

that earned him gentle mockery from the moderator here, and something I, not having his accomplishments, generally can't get away with outside the classroom). Eric Schmidt, I have great respect for as a broad thinker outside the technical sphere, though it's colored by working so long for his sword rivals. Simplifying their consensus views excessively, the pace of disruption AI promises is unprecedented and frightening even to those used to the Internet boom. Emergent capabilities arise beyond the creators' predictions, each becoming a research project to understand and control. Regulation promises to be both costly and futile; unfriendly international competition ensures an arms race preventing real limitations. Neither technologists with their optimistic biases nor humanists lacking technical understanding can be trusted to take the reins; who, then, is left? It was Snoop Dogg who best expressed everyone's feelings on the impact of AI technologies, concisely and with precision. As one of our generation's prominent lyricists, such poetic expressions are his forte. But it appears in another one or two conferences we will ask an AI poet to do Snoop's job.

This year, though the pragmatic part of my conference has been catching VC types to talk about my new project (AI-themed, of course). Besides these valuable contacts, I got to meet Alexandr Wang of Scale AI, whom I hope to soon count as a competitor. But I am particularly grateful to have a conversation with Francis Collins, who, for a card-carrying statistical genetics Ph.D., is as big a celebrity as anyone. He knew who my teachers were, and surprisingly told me that my scientific interests should now turn to developing machine learning models for neurology, not genomics. The implications of that particular bit of advice will take me quite a while to process, but I'm going to take it rather seriously.

Much gratitude to the Milken and the Institute for allowing me to observe the evolution of the Conference over the many years. I now get to be the one telling the new scholars 'back in my day...' and that's an honor.

Ahmed Reza, MS '99

The global conference was an overwhelming and stimulating experience. At the same time, this global conference was unique. I expected some conversation on artificial intelligence, and it seemed to dominate most of the events, panels, and attendees. I was especially surprised to be sought out by many of the attendees for advice on artificial intelligence. One such interesting contact was Jonathan Sokoloff of LGP. Another person I was very excited to meet was Reid Hoffman of LinkedIn. I was pleasantly surprised to meet Governor Gavin Newsom again and reminded him of our previous meeting. I quipped that his handwritten note from our meeting convinced me to keep my AI startup in California.

Maro Sciacchitano, MS '99

It's hard to choose a favorite session, but "Home Free: A Conversation with John Legend on the Path to Reentry after Incarceration" certainly stands out in my mind. The entire panel was compelling, and Mr. Capehart's moderation was excellent. One of the reasons I keep coming back to the Global Conference is to learn about issues I would likely never come across in my daily routine.

Of all the people I met at the conference this year, perhaps the most memorable was my conversation with Mike Piowar, who is an Executive VP at the Milken Institute. We had a wide ranging and insightful

discussion, and enjoyed the opportunity to get to know one of the people who helps make the Global Conference special.

I also had the opportunity to speak with David Blumberg, an investor with an unusual perspective in the world of venture capital. He had a lot of insight into the current state of early-stage investing, but even more interesting was our discussion about global problems and how to motivate people to focus on problems that need solving without getting distracted along the way.

The Global Conference gives me insight into business trends I cannot acquire from publications or casual conversations at work. You get a front row view of what's trendy, the latest fads, and enduring trends. Personally, the conference is a singular opportunity to learn, step away from my daily routine and meet people I would never cross paths with otherwise. Every year I make a few enduring connections, and build upon previously established relationships.

And the best part? Seeing my fellow Scholars in action of course!

Smith Sirisakorn, MS '00

Among the most exciting conversations I had at the Malibu Dialogues was one with Pete Stavros at KKR/Ownership Works. We had a lengthy discussion about a deal that he may be involved in concerning caregivers. In my role as the statewide interim President of the United Domestic Workers of America Retirees, there may be alignment in our interests in creating better financial outcomes for caregivers, and I may offer an interesting perspective from the nexus of a business person, labor activist, and caregiver.

Diane Ty and Lauren Dunning invited me to be a guest at the Advisory Board meeting for the Center for the Future of Aging. I was excited to learn what the panel thought about co-generational solutions to the impending aging crisis. I anticipate that with my appointment to the San Diego County Advisory Council for Aging and Independence Services, I will be able to help support the Center when they commence launching programming in San Diego. Furthermore, we will be discussing opportunities around supportive senior housing, as I will be joining and chairing the Housing Subcommittee for SD County.

I wanted to call out the spirit of open discussion at the Global Conference. People in attendance really wanted to converse and exchange ideas. I was able to share a few words with Governor Gavin Newsom. I met and spoke with Rep Maxine Waters, my hometown Congresswoman. I had a very lengthy conversation with Jim Golden about the future of our democracy and the future of AI. I spoke with multiple YLC members about how more young people should get involved in politics, especially considering how there is a 20+ year age gap between the average age of politicians and those of the people governing them. While I'm unsure of whether they will jump in a race, they gave me their contacts in support of a movement towards "Data Driven Progressivism that Loves America and Generally Likes Capitalism". Hopefully, together, we may be able to carry on the legacy of the American Dream.

Last but not least, thank you for creating opportunities for us Scholars to continue supporting one another, allowing us Scholars to have new memories together, and having a platform to reconnect with

one another. Thank you again for inviting us Milken Scholars to join in the Global Conference, and I look forward to keeping you all updated on what collaborations we are able to initiate in the coming months.

Michael Terry, MS '00

Of all the sessions, I found **The FinTech Movement: Social Economic Mobility Strategies** to be the one that both inspired and informed me the most. On that panel hosted incredibly well by Nicole Valentine, we were dazzled by unforgettable narratives of founders including Wemimo Abbey of Esusu, Jay Brown of RocNation/Marcy Ventures, and Tingting Peng of Moove. These complementary stories showed us all that there is no one path to see a great idea through to global scale. Each entrepreneur spoke of unique hardships of working to build and grow their vision from a seed into a thriving enterprise. I came away with renewed inspiration to see my own journey through to our next milestones of one million minutes of engagement in our app and \$250,000 in sales primarily benefiting underrepresented artists.

After the panel, I connected with Jay Brown who has taken an interest in using our proprietary technology to "crowdstream" live performances with his incredible roster of top-tier acts. Our ensuing dialog has been fruitful, and I plan to turn to Jay for insights as my team expands beyond live music into other strategic areas of live entertainment: youth sports and e-sports.

On the last day, I had the serendipitous encounter to connect with Ken Londoner, CEO of BioSig through an introduction from Lorraine Spurge. Ken showed me several possibilities for financing SubWire from Seed to Series A and beyond. His recommendations were financially sound, and rooted in his depth of learnings in financing public and private companies. We have made plans to meet on this topic in New York and Connecticut, as we close the round and look ahead to prepare for growth and expansion of Series A.

My main takeaway from this year's Global is that building relationships takes patience, boldness, and a bit of luck. This was not my first invite to Global, and I've now developed a strong nucleus of connections rooted in the Milken Scholars alums and extended MI network. I feel confident moving with familiar faces and new connections alike, as we explore topics of prosperity in nearly every major industry. I hope to repay the benefits of this invitation any way possible, but primarily through continued service and mentorship back to the Milken Scholars Program, particularly those with a career interest in STEM or creative arts.

Justin Han, MS '01

My favorite session of the Global Conference was on Increasing Financial Fluency in America, which was hosted by John Hope Bryant, included Alex Rodriguez, and moderated by Emily Musil Church. This was an Invite-only session so there was a limited group of people, making the session much more intimate and dynamic. This was my favorite session because you could literally feel the energy behind how passionate the speakers were about this topic. Without revealing any private information from the session, I can say that John Hope Bryant and Alex Rodriguez both went deep into their upbringing, personal stories, and motivations behind why they are so passionate about increasing Financial Fluency in America, particularly in the Black/Brown and rural communities. The entire course of their lives were altered when they found the right mentors and finally got educated about how Finances work and how

to build and maintain wealth -- and that has made all the difference. So now, they want to pay it forward, and bring in people from a range of industries and professions to get the message out there and help others.

I definitely want to figure out how I can help. Emily mentioned that she is in the process of seeing if she can organize a Summit to get a group together to brainstorm and come up with actionable next steps to drive this topic forward in America. This would be something I would be interested in attending.

I connected with Ahmed Reza, MS '99, for the first time. He also works in the Technology field as the founder of Yobi.app. I am considering launching a data startup with a focus on AI, so it was very helpful to hear about Ahmed's journey as an entrepreneur -- the ups, the downs, and everything in between. I'm sure this will help me be more judicious when I go through my journey of raising capital, building a team, crafting my startup's culture, etc. Most importantly, it was great just being able to connect with another Milken Scholar!

Ariane Tom (Founder of Kaleida Capital) -- Ariane operates a venture fund that invests in Neuroscience-related investments. It was refreshing and insightful to hear about how investments work in a completely different area from what I do -- and she happens to be a Stanford alum as well!

If I had to choose one main takeaway from my experience, it would be: **whatever your goal is (or you think is possible) - think bigger!**

I met so many individuals at the Conference who achieved extraordinary social, political, or financial impact -- often way beyond what their initial goal was or what they thought they could realistically achieve. By showing up each day, working hard, and building a great team around you, the possibilities are indeed endless. If you open your mind up and do not limit yourself (i.e., get out of your own way by minimizing self-doubt, fear of failure, etc.), you will be able to do more, achieve more, and help more people.

Going back to my favorite session on Increasing Financial Fluency in America, Alex Rodriguez told us his personal story regarding his real estate investments. When he first started his professional baseball career, he purchased a duplex and was so proud of that moment. Growing up, simply becoming a landlord was one of his biggest childhood dreams. Fast forward to today, and his real estate portfolio through his various companies is in the thousands of units and billions of dollars -- something he never would have thought was possible when his younger self was setting goals. Through hard work and identifying the right mentors, however, he was able to vastly exceed his own expectations and build the business empire he has today.

Nuria Santamaria, MS '01

My experience at the Milken Institute Global Conference was an invigorating day of learning and connecting. I attended a number of sessions across media, marketing, mental health, and more. One of my favorite sessions was the marketing session 'CMO Insights: How to Manage Your Marketing in the

Age of Volatility', which was a very insightful conversation with the CMO of the Milken Institute, Logitech, Pepsi, Shake Shack and Visa.

Two of the most interesting people I met include Frank Cooper III, CMO of Visa, who is a very well-regarded leader in the marketing industry. I also had the opportunity to meet a professor of clinical psychology at Pepperdine University, with whom I had an engaging conversation about the future of mental healthcare in light of the rapid advancements in AI.

Thank you to Michael Milken for making it possible for me and other Milken Scholars to attend the Global Conference this year. Thank you also to the Milken Scholars program team including Evelyn Torres and Jane Foley for facilitating such a wonderful experience for the Scholars.

Daniel Adomian, MS '03

My favorite session was on Nearshoring and New Trade Dynamics. The session speakers included Rep. Darrell Issa, Nuevo Leon Governor Samuel Garcia, as well as several private trade organizations. It was encouraging to see the impact of cross-border cooperation and investment, as well as the beneficial role that well-developed courts and contract enforcement play in creating the conditions for investment and development. Key drivers are both economic as well as geo-political considerations for bringing supply chains closer to key markets. What remains to be dealt with is how cross-border parties can find a way to cooperate on pollution and enforcement of trade terms.

I was delighted to meet Eli Broverman of TheTreasury.com and Lee Stern of Centre Lane Partners. Eli was receptive to my idea of developing a tool that specifically helps solo entrepreneurs and creatives with financial planning. Lee was passionate about everything from tea to COVID-19 research.

There were a few key takeaways. First, being in a room with members of governments was a powerful experience and showed how face to face dialogue can bring people together and move conversations forward. Second, another session on the Space Economy left me somewhat jaded. The conclusion of every panel member was that humans will simply have to learn how to cooperate better in order for the space economy to function. This was stated with respect to rule of law, property rights, and resource management. I left feeling somewhat jaded, because I do not believe that human nature is capable of that level of cooperation. Still, it prompts the fascinating question of how humans will resolve disputes in space. Perhaps there will be space courts and space police chasing down space bandits! As for professional development, this was a great opportunity to be surrounded by founders and executives who are solving problems. It is inspirational, to say the least.

Marisol Leon, MS '03

I was only able to attend the Conference on Wednesday and had a wonderful experience. I particularly enjoyed the "Digital Age & Democracy" Panel. It provided me with an opportunity to hear from experts in very different fields reflect on "information warfare" and its current and potential impact on society. In the future I hope to participate in the full conference as this 1-day opportunity allowed me to see how I can best prepare to take in the full experience of the 3-day conference.

Angelina Calderon, MS '06

I only attended Wednesday and I wish I would have been able to attend the full conference. Thank you so much for the opportunity! I didn't understand the power of connection and networking that was available at the Milken Global Conference. I hope I get the opportunity to attend a full session in the future.

It is hard to choose one favorite session because I LOVED both private sessions for very different reasons! My first session was **Gun Violence Prevention: What innovations and investments can make a breakthrough?** The conversation was so fruitful in dissecting the various components of gun violence and all the different strategies that are needed to combat this national problem. I learned about the importance of collaboration across different sectors and changing the narrative of the conversation to understand all the different types of gun violence.

The second private session was **Nearshoring's Impact of North America: A New Era in Trade Dynamics.** To be honest, I had no idea what I was walking into but it was so interesting to learn about the impact of foreign relations and offshore conflicts have had on investments in Mexico. I was impressed by the experts in the room and I'm excited to see what this new trade era brings to the country. At the same time, I appreciated that the conversation touched both companies finding more convenient/efficient investment locations as well as the importance of supporting the local communities to grow/benefit in conjunction with the trade developments.

I had the privilege of meeting Talia Rivera, Executive Director at the Fund for a Safer Future. We spoke about her work in Boston supporting communities to end gang violence and lift folks out of poverty. I thanked her for sharing in the morning session and we connected over the Milken Scholars Program. Post conference, I connected over dinner with Milken Scholars Marisol Leon, 2003, Jorge Campos, 2017 and Gural Nuriyev, 2019. I had met Marisol and Jorge before but it was my first time meeting Gural. I appreciated him sharing his story and it reminded me that so many of the Scholars are working for a better world not just for themselves but for our families.

The Global Milken Conference opened up my mind to so many more professional possibilities that I hadn't even considered. My mind made connections between business, comedy, social services and neurological pursuits. I look forward to continuing to process how I can apply everything I learned into my life.

Jennifer Quintana, MS '09

My favorite session for the Milken Global Conference 2023 (other than the puppies) was the Preventing Gun Violence through Technology and Innovation. I was a bit nervous going into the session because it's such a polarizing topic these days, and people have such fierce passion both to protect themselves and their loved ones and to maintain their personal freedom.

It was reassuring to see that all of the folks in the room, despite coming from different backgrounds and perspectives on the issue, recognize that it's not as simple as "just take the guns away" and the one thing everyone agreed on was that the media's oversimplification of complex issues is detrimental to the national conversation. The collaboration from pastors, social workers, engineers, surgeons, and industry executives to solve a complex problem and to have an open and honest discussion, without

discounting someone's opinion for political reasons, set the tone of the conference and reassured me that there's still some sense in the world.

The discussion group recognizes that domestic violence, suicide, mass shootings, and gang violence are not the same problem – though they do use the same tool/weapon – and they require different solutions. It is my hope that we can continue to collaborate and have much needed open and honest discussions to move forward toward reducing gun violence in all its forms.

Darrell Blocker was one of the people that had the greatest impact on me this conference. We introduced ourselves after the Preventing Gun Violence session, and to be honest, I actually didn't know who he was when I went over to say hello. I was very interested in his comments on the importance of human interactions (when discussing the use of AI to lower gun violence risks and identify behaviors), so I went over to say hello and ask a question.

After we exchanged business cards and went off to the next session, I googled him and his security company, of course. Darrell worked for many years in the CIA as a station chief and now works for Mosaic, a cybersecurity company. As happens with meeting people at GC23, I am always amazed by how humble and willing to chat everyone is. We are surrounded by company founders and CEOs, government officials, and so many people with tremendous accomplishments to their names, and they are more than happy to introduce themselves and have engaging conversations about the issues we face around world. I actually got the opportunity to watch one of his [TED talks on kindness](#) after GC23. It was one of the most important takeaways from the conference for me – the reminder that although we get caught up in our work tasks, our home lives, our school assignments, we should always remember to be kind and to listen.

I think my main takeaway really relates to the people I connected with at the conference. To hear Dr. Mae Jemison talk during the aerospace session, and to remember that we are all #teamearthlings and to hear Darrell Blocker's TedTalk about kindness even under the most extreme adversarial circumstances reminds me, and I hope reminds us all, that we must focus on collaboration and technology innovation but also we must never forget the human element.

Zijian Wu, MS '10

The Milken Global Conference was an incredibly thought provoking three days, allowing me to engage with topics as broad as AI governance, workforce transformation and learning, retirement, gun violence, and corporate governance. Discussion on the Roles and Goals of Corporate Boards and a workshop on Gun Violence Prevention stood out, not only because they were topics that I was less personally familiar with but also due to the diversity in perspectives; it was interesting to see the varying viewpoints, many of which were still being formed and refined. Generative AI, of course, was in almost every conversation, and reminded me of the hype around digital and self-driving cars when I had first attended the conference almost a decade ago. While in this case, the excitement and use-cases are already manifesting, and I'm already starting to incorporate it in my work, part of the joy of the conference is in the excitement around the opportunity of new technology, regardless of its stage of development.

Of course, the most interesting parts of the conference were in the discussions with other attendees. Conversations with Ritesh from Infosys about anticipating shifting consulting spend around generative

AI for his company and with Dr. Frederick Chen, the Chief Health Officer for the AMA, about gun violence, were particularly enlightening. Lastly of course, it was also really nice being able to connect with fellow Milken Scholars at the conference, hearing about their wide interests and what they were hoping to learn or soak up from the conference. Thank you for the opportunity to attend!

David Tang-Quan, MS '11

I was fortunate to be able to attend the Milken Global Conference for the third time this year, having previously attended in 2016 and 2021. I continue to be blown away each time I attend, and I also feel like my experiences continue to build on one another and allow me to gain more and more from the conference each time.

As an innovation consultant whose focus is developing and launching startups for Fortune 500 companies, particularly in the healthcare sector, I am always excited about some of the panels on innovation in healthcare. I believe two of the most exciting frontier spaces relate to the microbiome and to psychedelics in medical applications, so I was pleased to see both on the agenda. The session on the microbiome in particular ("Trust your gut: Is the microbiome the new disruptor in healthcare and disease treatment?") helped reinforce to me how the focus often falls on the gut microbiome, but some of the earliest applications of microbiome-related research and innovation will likely come from the skin and female reproductive tract's microbiomes. All of the panelists engaged well with one another in advancing the discussion on both the current state of the research, as well as the current state of consumers' expectations and willingness to experiment in this space.

The Global Conference is also very much about the people that you meet during and after sessions, oftentimes with a shared interest given you may be coming out of the same session. With GenAI being quite the buzzword at the conference, it is probably no surprise that I met an interesting entrepreneur working on a startup in the space, and it was nice to be able to provide my own perspectives and advice about launching in the space, as well as learn about some of the most challenging aspects of the technical build. Another interesting conversation was with a seaweed entrepreneur who had created a number of different seaweed-based food items for the health-conscious consumer. I'm always impressed and learn a lot about market positioning and the latest in consumer trends through other entrepreneurs, and these conversations were no different.

My main takeaway from GC23 was the importance of adaptability and continuous learning. The conference showcased the latest trends and advancements across a number of industries, and it became evident that embracing change continues to be necessary for long-term growth and success. Personally, it reinforced the value of lifelong learning and pushed me to seek out new opportunities for skill development and knowledge acquisition. Professionally, it emphasized the need to stay agile and adaptable in an ever-changing landscape, as well as the importance of building a robust network of colleagues and mentors to support and inspire one another. I look forward to staying in touch with many of the amazing people I connected with at the conference, and look forward to hopefully attending in future years as well. Thank you again to Mike, the Milken Institute, the Milken Family Foundation, and the Milken Scholars program for the opportunity to attend!

Sepora Makabeh, MS '13

The Milken Institute's 2023 Global Conference was an incredible experience, and I am truly so grateful to have attended. I want to extend a huge thank you to Mike and the entire Milken Institute for providing me, and all Scholars, with a chance to engage with such fantastic thought leaders and fascinating content. My favorite session was one of the private sessions that I was invited to, Accelerating Community Infrastructure and Equitable Economic Development: The 10,000 Communities Initiative. I had the chance to participate in an in-depth dialogue about the need to blend public and private capital and the way that the workforce can engage in the pathway to climate action and sustainability through infrastructure. Between sessions, I had the chance to connect with Tina Raine-Bennett and Margot Fahnestock, the CEO and COO of Medicines360, a nonprofit pharmaceutical company. I learned about the IUD that they currently have available and the joint birth control & PREP pill that they're working on. Given my experience managing wealth for nonprofit organizations, I was able to engage with Tina and Margot on the benefits of a potential partnership, as well as offer to connect them with clinics in Chicago. Tina is actually going to be in Chicago this upcoming week, and we're having coffee to continue to discuss a potential partnership and to set the stage for introductions that she has asked me to make. I also loved meeting Jay Brown of Roc Nation, who I spoke with after he served as speaker on a panel. We connected over the need for financial literacy in underserved communities, and I was able to share the programming that I'm currently working on to bring financial education to high school students on the south side with him. Jay provided me with his contact information, and I'm really excited about continuing our conversation. My main takeaway from the global conference was actually from the session with Deepak Chopra and Seth Rogen, where they discussed brain health. During the session, they highlighted the impact that stress has on the brain, and the role that psychedelics could potentially play in holistic medicine. The conversation left me excited about the work that's being done to understand brain health, Alzheimer's, and ultimately to better understand the brain and mind. After hearing their discussion, I plan to devote more time to yoga and meditation, and to continue to educate myself on brain research. On the professional front, the 2023 Global Conference provided me with the chance to build new relationships with other passionate attendees, and I've already continued the conversation with a number of inspirational founders, individuals in the venture capital world, and other movers and shakers. Thank you again for this opportunity!

Daniel Lee, MS '14

Favorite Session: From Asian Excellence to Creative Excellence (further elaboration below)

My two connections at the Global Conference were made organically, by sitting at an empty seat at panels next to fellow global conference attendees and introducing myself to them:

Rob Harwood works at Guggenheim Investments, the company where I previously worked. Though we overlapped during my time at Guggenheim, we didn't have a chance to work together. We did, however, talk about mutual connections and talked about how the firm was doing since the passing of Scott Miner (Global CIO). We then proceeded to listen to Anne Walsh speak during the Credit Outlook panel which Mike moderated.

I met Stanley Yu, who works in the Investor Relations Group at Leonard Green & Partners. I shared some of the Corporate Development work that my group at Sony Pictures does and Stanley shared LGP's deal activity, portfolio monitoring, and fundraising across new funds.

I was inspired by the stories and initiatives shared by Daniel Dae Kim, Janet Yang, Padma Lakshmi, and Eric Nam during the "From Asian Excellence to Creative Excellence" panel, moderated by Curtis Chin. The last several years have proven that there is a strong demand for Asian content and creatives (e.g., *Parasite's* Best Picture Win, success of *Squid Game* on Netflix, success of Blackpink and BTS, and the historic Oscar victories by *Everything Everywhere All At Once*). During South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's visit to Washington D.C. earlier this spring, Netflix committed to developing and producing \$2.5 billion of Korean content. Several weeks before that, K-Pop girl group, Blackpink, was the Saturday headline at Coachella, the first time all three headliners at Coachella were not white (Bad Bunny and Frank Ocean opened on Friday and Sunday night, respectively). The global conference allowed me to not only hear the perspectives and thoughts of leaders in the field, but it has also motivated me to find ways to contribute to the cultural recognition that has, for too long, been underappreciated and denied by the broader media.

Michelle Park, MS '15

Attending this year's Milken Global Conference as a 2015 Milken Scholar was an incredible experience, and I'm deeply grateful to Mike for this opportunity. My favorite session of the conference was "From Asian Excellence to Creative Excellence." As a Korean American, I was inspired by the stories of top AAPI leaders pushing the limits of creativity and innovation in media. I left the panel feeling motivated to use my work to show up authentically in the public sphere as I begin to talk more publicly about my startup, especially when it's difficult to do so.

During the conference, I had the opportunity to meet many potential investors who gave me strong feedback on and leads for my AI startup. I also had interesting conversations on AI with attendees from diverse viewpoints. As a younger female technologist who worked in both Big Tech and government on the COVID response in both software and product, I discovered that my perspective on the translation barriers between technologists and policymakers could help the two sides work closer together. My chats with attendees from government, tech companies, philanthropy, and international leaders led to incredible opportunities for me to contribute to these discussions after the conference.

One of the highlights of the conference was meeting Mae Jemison, a former NASA astronaut who had always inspired me. My very first job interview was actually with NASA when I was in high school, so meeting her (and handing her my business card!) felt like a full-circle moment. I also loved my chat with Alexis Ohanian, the founder of Reddit, who gave me advice on embodying the values and impact I'd want my future employees to have. I plan to carry these learnings with me in my startup and foster an inclusive, values-oriented culture from the very start of my company's journey. Overall, the Milken Global Conference was an incredible experience that inspired me to think big, push the boundaries of my creativity, and make the world a better place for everyone around me. I look forward to using the insights I gained in my company and every venture I take on going forward.

Eli Gramajo, MS '15

A recap of my experience at the Global Conference: To sum it up, it was both an educational and career development experience. I think the most important aspect I got out of it was the inspiration and motivation to keep doing what I love: investing and serving the world. Being at MFS, I feel like I am in a bubble and it sometimes can feel like my career is too uncertain. The conference made me realize that my career is not dependent on my employer but rather the actions I take and the people I connect with. I hope to continue building my networking skills. I know some are better at it than me so I have lots to improve.

My top sessions included one with Joe Manchin's discussion of the IRA act along with other topics. I love real estate so the "Funding Real Estate" discussion was extremely helpful. I enjoyed the energy and climate sessions. My favorite was the invite-only private session on "The Road to 2035." I am glad the Milken Institute proposed ways to better understand how we will become greener.

I reconnected with a lot of the Scholars and met amazing people. I met Arthur Lee who is a young founder for SAI Tech. I was intrigued by his keenness to talk to investors. He came with a proposal and was diligent to share his company to others. At the YLC event, I met many young successful people. Founders, partners, etc. that I hope to have the opportunity to continue connecting with.

Jorge Campos, MS '17

An opportunity to attend a world class conference does not come around often, and I was thrilled to be in attendance this year as a conference attendee as opposed to running around as an intern supporting the MCAAD team like I did on my first visit. I knew what this opportunity entailed; an invitation to Global Conference 2023 meant a chance to hear from the greatest minds in their fields, rub shoulders with accomplished professionals and celebrities, but perhaps more importantly it provided an opportunity for unparalleled personal and professional advancement.

I'm a founder of a digital health startup building tools already used by some of the world's largest mental health research institutions to provide better care to research participants and patients. So, it's no surprise that I gravitated to the healthtech, digital health, and mental health sessions. Where I was captivated and informed by the incredible leaders in the space, including Global Director of Healthcare Strategy at Google Cloud and Head of Digital Health at Samsung. I walked away with relationships to leverage, partnerships to explore, and even VC contacts for raising capital. As if that wasn't enough, I'm an investment banker by training (at Lazard), and got to see Lazard's CEO take the main stage just a few feet from me!

Global conference provides an incredible opportunity to learn about the space I am building in, facilitates industry relationships, and fuels my role in making a difference in it. Thanks again to the Milken Scholars Program, the MCAAD team, and Mike Milken and family for making it possible.

Gural Nuriyev, MS '19

The Milken Institute Global Conference was an amazing event and absolutely worth the red-eye. In a single day at the conference, I was exposed to many worlds that I wasn't a part of. Attending sessions on gun-control, US-Mexico relations, space exploration, and hearing from leaders in these fields not only informed me on the current developments in these areas, but also enabled me to make predictions on future developments. My favorite session was "Out of This World: Investing in Space Exploration", as it reminded me how small our daily challenges are in the context of space.

The conference was densely packed with brilliant and influential people. Notably, I had an opportunity to meet with Cheryl Evans, the Director of the Center for Financial Markets at the Milken Institute. I sat front-row at a panel she led, discussing retirement, financial literacy and novel solutions in fintech. It so happens to be that I have a research background in retirement economics and I have written papers in financial literacy, so I was excitedly following the panel. As it ended, I introduced myself to Ms. Evans - she was ecstatic to meet a Milken Scholar. Given my current development of AI tools, I offered myself as a resource to Ms. Evans and the Milken Institute on all questions AI, as I hope to give back to the Institute where I can. Additionally, at the conference, I met some Milken Scholars for the first time. Marisol León, Angelina Calderón, and I went for a dinner, which was a good change of pace after such an eventful day. In an informal setting, we talked about our backgrounds and were surprised to find we had much in common.

Be it Milken Scholars meetings or the Milken Global Conference, attending events hosted by the Milken Institute serves as an opportunity to be around highly accomplished and inspirational individuals. Spending time with them raises my standards for what I consider acceptable of my own work and expands my ability to approach challenges from an interdisciplinary lens.