

Penn GSE Board of Overseers member Allison Weiss Brady, C'93, has enjoyed a broad and fascinating career path—fashion model, owner of a PR/marketing agency, and writer and photographer for Yahoo! Travel—and she knows that her education helped to make her success possible. Through charitable work and involvement with Penn, Brady and her husband, Chip Brady, C'94, W'94, a member of Penn Engineering's Board of Overseers, have continued their families' legacies of supporting education and Penn. Brady, who was the sole recipient of Penn's 2008 Young Alumni Award of Merit, sat down with us to talk about why she advocates for education, and the joy she has experienced while helping others attain their academic goals.

**You have supported a variety of education-based causes, including the nonprofit your family established, Say Yes to Education, Inc. Why is education important to you, and what have been the highlights of your charitable work?**  
I think that education is the foundation for everything—if you don't have a solid education, you really can't do your best in life. So any opportunity to help someone else have a wonderful education definitely captures my interest. I first started volunteering for Say Yes to Education when I was in high school, and over the years I have seen how the organization provides financial and emotional support that truly helps inner-city youth to graduate from high school and college. Among the other education-

based causes I support, my work with Big Brothers Big Sisters has been particularly important and meaningful to me. I have been mentoring my Little Sister, Jeanette, for ten years now, and she just graduated from high school in June. She'll always be my little sister.

**How did your own education at Penn influence your path in life?**  
I had an amazing time when I was a student at Penn's Annenberg School for Communication. My professional experience has run the gamut of what a job in the communications field can be, and I'm incredibly grateful to Penn for that.

**You are in your second term on Penn GSE's Board of Overseers. What have been the rewards of your work with GSE?**  
Penn GSE is one of the best education schools in the country and offers a tremendous amount of opportunity and expertise to its students. It's been extremely rewarding for me to use the marketing and public relations skills I learned at Penn to help raise GSE's profile in media outlets, and raise money for the school to support student scholarships.

**How did your father, University Trustee Emeritus George A. Weiss, W'65, instill in you the value of philanthropy and the importance of helping others?**  
My first memory of my family's involvement in service is of my father and my mother, former Penn GSE Overseer Diane N. Weiss, making their first Say Yes scholarship announcement to 112 sixth graders in West Philadelphia when I was about sixteen years old. They promised to pay for these kids' college education if they graduated from high school. The parents and the students couldn't believe that two people who had never met them before were so willing to help them. From then on I saw that part of the joy of philanthropy is helping new friends who eventually become your extended family.

**You and your family have a tremendous legacy of supporting Penn, including through scholarship aid for the University and GSE. Why do you believe it is important to support scholarships?**  
A student could have great gifts to bring to Penn, but if he or she can't afford an education, that potential may never be shared with the world. That is why the scholarships supported by generous donors, including my sister, Debbie Weiss, C'89, and my husband, Chip Brady, C'94, W'94, are so important.

My husband and I established the Weiss Brady Family Scholarship at GSE to help the school attract, recruit, and train the most qualified and passionate students and to help those students afford a Penn education. I view it as bringing Say Yes's work with urban students full circle by helping to provide great teachers for urban schools.

**Penn GSE is celebrating its Centennial. What are you most proud of in Penn GSE's first 100 years, and what do you hope for the next 100?**  
As an Overseer, I'm most proud of the extraordinary job that I've seen Dean Andy Porter, the board members, the faculty, students, and

staff do, and how that commitment to excellence has been reflected in GSE's rise in the national rankings. I'm looking forward to the School's continued success and growth as it enters its second century. ■

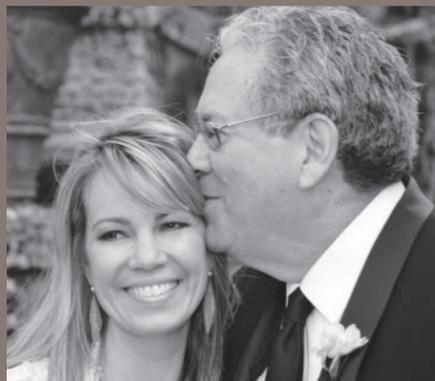
→ Allison Weiss Brady, C'93, and her husband, Chip Brady, C'94, W'94, established the Weiss Brady Family Scholarship to help Penn GSE attract, recruit, and train the most qualified and passionate students.

Photo by Kicka Witte



# BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

interviewed by Karen Doss Bowman



Brady (left) learned about the value of philanthropy from her father, University Trustee Emeritus George A. Weiss, W'65 (right).

Photo by Tim Otto Photography

## A Legacy of Giving Back

Allison Weiss Brady's father, George A. Weiss, W'65, established Say Yes to Education, Inc. in 1987 to improve high school and graduation rates in urban areas, starting with 112 students at Belmont Elementary School in West Philadelphia. Determined to teach his two daughters the value of giving back to one's community, Weiss encouraged them to volunteer with Say Yes when they were teenagers. Today, Brady is still involved in educational and other causes, including serving on the boards of Jackson Memorial Foundation and Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation. Her sister, Deborah Lynn Weiss, C'89, serves on the board of The National Association to Protect Children, which works to protect children from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

"Seeing both of my daughters continue our family's legacy of helping others is the ultimate satisfaction," says George Weiss, who has grown Say Yes to reach more than 60,000 students. A generous Penn supporter, Weiss has established numerous scholarships throughout the University, as well as the chair held by the dean of Penn GSE, the George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education.

## ALLISON WEISS BRADY, C'93, ON EDUCATION FOR LIFE

"I endowed the dean's position to send a strong message about my belief in education and Penn GSE, and my excitement about the School's growth," Weiss says. "My professors and fellow students at Penn were like a second family to me. When I have the opportunity to give back to this great university, I take it."

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