

Citation for Raquel Jaramillo, May 2022
Presented by Belinda Kong, John F. and Dorothy H. Magee
Associate Professor of Asian Studies and English

Raquel Jaramillo is a graphic designer, illustrator, and author.

Born to immigrant parents from Colombia, she earned a bachelor of fine arts from Parsons School of Design and started her career as a book cover designer, later becoming the creative director of Henry Holt Adult trade books and the children's book director at Workman Publishing. She and her husband, Russell Gordon, are cofounders of 1000 Jars Productions, a company that develops original print and screen content for children.

Ms. Jaramillo's first novel, *Wonder*, was published under the pen name R. J. Palacio in 2012. It became a worldwide bestseller, with fifteen million copies in print and translations into fifty-five languages, inspiring an Oscar-nominated movie adaptation in 2017 as well as the Choose Kind movement.

Ms. Jaramillo has also written several companion books to *Wonder*—including *Auggie and Me*, *365 Days of Wonder*, *We're All Wonders*, and most recently, *White Bird*, a graphic novel whose film adaptation will be released later this year.

As Ms. Jaramillo shares in interviews, *Wonder* was inspired by a real-life incident outside an ice cream parlor one day when her younger son started crying out of fear after noticing a girl with a facial difference. Her own unpreparedness to react to the situation at the time prompted her to think deeply about those who have to, in her words, “face a world every day that doesn't know how to face you back.” She started writing the novel that night, imagining the world of a ten-year-old boy born with Treacher Collins syndrome who teaches those around him to treat others, including those with bodies of difference, with kindness, respect, and dignity.

The novel ends with a precept that reminds us not just to tolerate difference in people but to applaud their everyday survival: “Everyone in the world,” she writes, “should get a standing ovation at least once in their life because we all overcometh the world.”

President Rose, on behalf of the College, I am honored to present Raquel Jaramillo for the degree of doctor of letters, *honoris causa*.