

## Aisha Muharrar '02

Growing up, Aisha Muharrar's strongest interests were writing and service. Bay Shore, with its commitment to the arts and tradition of civic involvement, was an ideal environment for her passions to become a pattern.

Aisha's life in Bay Shore began with the decision of her grandparents, minister Moses and homemaker Betty Bryant, to move from Georgia to New York in 1957. By the late 1960s, their family was living in Bay Shore. While Aisha's mother attended Brentwood schools, the younger siblings of the family went to Bay Shore. In the mid-80s, after marriage and divorce in Connecticut, Aisha's mother Barbara returned to the town the rest of her family had made their home.

Educated at Mary G. Clarkson, Gardiner Manor, South Country, Bay Shore Middle School, and Bay Shore High School, Aisha graduated as class valedictorian in 2002.

While at BSHS, Aisha was Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Maroon Echo*, a violinist in the orchestra, a member of the volleyball team (where she brought more enthusiasm than athletic ability), and Student Council Co-President. She co-chaired the school's Ethnic Pen conference, founded the school's Anti-Violence committee, and volunteered at Bay Shore - Brightwaters Public Library. She also wrote for national magazine *Teen People* and Long Island's *Newsday*. During her freshman year, Aisha was inspired by her experiences with friends in a variety of social groups and began writing a book about labels and cliques. *More Than A Label: Why What You Wear and Who You're With Doesn't Define Who You Are* was published in 2002. It was selected as a "New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age" (2003) and "Read, America!" Selection (2002).

Aisha attended Harvard University, where she graduated in 2006 with an AB in English and American Literature and Language, and was Ibis of the *Harvard Lampoon*. When she graduated, she was named one of the "Fifteen Most Interesting Seniors at Harvard."

Immediately following college, Aisha attended the Screen and

Television Graduate Program at USC School for the Cinematic Arts. After a year, she took a leave of absence to acquire industry work experience in LA. During this time, she was offered a staff writer position on the Fox television show *Sit Down, Shut Up*, an animated sitcom about a group of teachers. In 2009, Aisha joined the staff of NBC's *Parks and Recreation*, where she wrote and produced the critically acclaimed, Emmy-nominated television series for six seasons, starting as a staff writer in Season 2 and ending as a Co-Executive Producer by the final episode. The show's focus on optimistic public servant Leslie Knope led Aisha to work with real-life public officials First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, and Senator John McCain. She was also a Co-Executive Producer of NBC's *The Good Place*.

Additionally, Aisha wrote and directed the original play *Seldom, Very Seldom* for the Unscreened Theater Series. She has also sold three comedy pilots, two to NBC and one to ABC, which include Amy Poehler and Ed Helms as executive producers. She has been nominated for a Primetime Emmy, Writers Guild Award, and an NAACP Award.

Aisha is on the board of the fundraising reading series The Freya Project and is the founder of its Los Angeles chapter. She has hosted fundraisers for Women's Center for Creative Work, Worldwide Orphans, and the Los Angeles Public Library. She has also mentored several younger writers. In 2016, she was the year's Guest of Honor for LAANE (Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy). Aisha has been profiled in *Vogue*, *ELLE*, *The Guardian*, *Essence*, and other publications.

She lives in California with her husband, writer and director Ben Epstein.

It is with pride and gratitude that she joins the Bay Shore High School Alumni Hall of Fame.