

honoree

## Clemantine Wamariya

Class of 2008



Clemantine Wamariya is an internationally renowned speaker, a *New York Times* bestselling author, and an accomplished human rights advocate. Her memoir, *The Girl Who Smiled Beads*, written with Elizabeth Weil, debuted with Crown Publishers in April 2018 and has now been released in five languages and dozens of countries. In vivid prose, the book describes Wamariya's journey from her idyllic childhood in Kigali, Rwanda, up until 1994 to seeking refuge in eight different countries throughout Africa, to finally

receiving refugee status in the USA in 2000.

Wamariya received her B.A. in comparative literature from Yale University in 2014 and built her career as “a compelling storyteller and fierce advocate” (as described by Amy Poehler’s Smart Girls organization). Wamariya has appeared four times as a guest on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” and was appointed by President Obama in 2011 to serve on the board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, making her the youngest board member in the organization’s history. During her first year she was recognized for her dedication to improving the lives of others, especially the underserved, and she was reappointed in 2016. She brings her powerful perspective, expressed in her 2018 TED Talk, “War and what comes after,” to various organizations, including the boards of Women for Women International and Refugee Transitions.

Wamariya is committed to creating platforms that allow individuals from diverse demographic backgrounds to build relationships and exchange ideas. In this way, she challenges us to reexamine the way that we interact with one another in order to work towards our shared goal of improved equity in our communities.

