

**Jane H.S. Park '93**

Seattle, WA

*Region III Alumni Trustee Candidate*

Princeton provided Jane Hyo-Sung Park with confidence as a scholar, and her thesis adviser, Helene Silverberg, made an enormous difference. “Whenever somebody in a position of authority takes you seriously, I think that is such a gift,” Park said. “The experience I had at Princeton enabled me to have the confidence to go on and build a career that I couldn’t have dreamed about growing up.”

A successful consumer and technology entrepreneur who founded two venture-backed startups that achieved national distribution in retailers such as Target and Costco, Park points to the power of her Princeton education in transforming the trajectory of her family within one generation. Her father was orphaned at age 9, when the demilitarized zone barrier between South and North Korea was established while he was at school, separating him from his house and family on the northern side. Later, he and his wife immigrated to Canada when Park was 4, and the family operated a 7-Eleven store in Toronto. The literal and figurative distance of her family’s journey is why she advocates so strongly for education and is so grateful for her Princeton experience.

Park earned her law degree from Yale, began her career at The Boston Consulting Group and then worked as a director of new ventures at Starbucks. This led to her work launching her first startup. In 2007, she raised more than \$50 million from Silicon Valley to create Julep Beauty, a Seattle-based chain of social nail parlors that also offered a subscription box. “I didn’t realize when I was raising venture capital that only 2% of funds go to women-run companies,” Park

said. “After achieving an exit for Julep [in 2016], I committed to mentoring other women entrepreneurs to share the true story behind the headlines so that they wouldn’t feel so alone in the process.”

Julep was remarkable for an open, collaborative office culture. Park introduced “Failure Fridays” meetings where colleagues openly shared the initiatives and experiments that did not work and why. “I learned that resilience is a team sport, best developed by transparently and vulnerably sharing lessons learned – especially the hardest earned ones,” she said. Pursuing “failure goals” became a concept that Park continues to share in her speaking engagements and leadership consulting.

After selling Julep, Park began to think of ways to help the environment. In 2019, she founded Tokki, a social and sustainable gifting-technology company that offered personalized QR-coded gift bags made of recycled water bottles. “When a problem seems intractable or too complex, I believe in figuring out a way to take one step toward ‘better,’” said Park, who sold Tokki last year.

Leveraging decades of experience growing teams, she is now a founding partner of the Park Snyder Group (PSG), which empowers founders and C-suite leaders to build enduring, mission-driven companies. Beyond her entrepreneurship, Park has been a member of the board of the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship since 2014. The public-private scholarship program is dedicated to building lasting pathways to post-secondary education and high-demand health care, STEM and trade careers for Washington students of all backgrounds. “That’s something that I’m

incredibly passionate about because education has been transformative for me,” Park said. “That college degree means everything to moving up and significantly improving a student’s family income. There are so many scholars from low-income, first-generation backgrounds who are using the scholarship to pursue their educational goals. Meeting with them is so energizing.”

Park is proud to see that Princeton has become even more accessible to students like her. “I visit campus often now, and I’m amazed by the growth and diversity,” she said. “For a place that is so steeped in tradition to be moving forward constantly, ever-changing and evolving — that’s one of the things that I admire most about Princeton.”