At the Head of All Classes

After two decades in New York, educational reformer Jean-Claude Brizard takes the top school job in the Second City
Have Passport, Will Travel | Leslie Jay

Over the summer, education extends beyond borders for faculty, students, and staff.

Outstanding Grads Face the Future

Thousands of talented students earned Queens College degrees last year; here are profiles of four.

This Season at the Kupferberg Center

The complete schedule of performances and exhibitions, all in an insert that’s easy to tear out and save.
**A Forgotten Hero**

I was one of only two people from my graduating class to attend our recent 50th anniversary, and was pleasantly surprised to see a building named after Gregory Razran, who chaired the psychology department when I was a student. Equally, I was disappointed to find no trace of memory of Lt. Alan Rea ’55, after whom the old Air Force ROTC “building” (more of a hut, actually) was named. Lt. Rea was killed when his plane was shot down by a malfunctioning plane and guided it away from a populated area in Europe rather than save himself by bailing out. He is certainly an alumnus worthy of QC’s respect and memory.

Peter Suedfeld ’60

**A Hero Remembers**

For their superb actions in eliminating Osama bin Laden, the Navy Seal Team 6 received the Presidential Unit Citation from President Obama. I am proud to say that, during World War II, I was part of a unit that also received this citation.

On August 13, 1944, a German reconnaissance plane sent a message that was intercepted by radio operators of the 3rd Radio Squadron mobile. The message, decoded by this writer, indicated that Allied landing craft in the harbor of Ajaccio, Corsica, had been spotted. This was a matter of importance to Allied HQ, and they ordered us to increase our monitoring of these frequencies.

Two days later these landing craft took part in the invasion of southern France. The success of this invasion made it clear to the commander of the German Nineteenth Army, defenders of that entire sector, that they would soon be outfitted. The commander sent a message to Berlin requesting transport planes to evacuate almost his entire staff. This message also was intercepted and decoded by 3rd Radio, as was Berlin’s reply, which indicated the numbers, airdrops, and times of arrival of these R-U-52s.

The commander of the 9th US Air Force, Major General Hoyt Vandenberg, arranged for fighter squadrons at the ready in the areas involved. Thus, when the transports picked up their human cargo, they were pounced upon by our fighters as they took off. Virtually every enemy aircraft was destroyed.

A few days afterwards the men of 3rd Radio (located somewhere in the field between Normandy and Paris) were informed in person by Major General Vandenberg that he was requesting that the entire unit be granted the Presidential Unit Citation. In March 1945 President Roosevelt granted us the honor. We were issued the special laurel leaf patch that is sewn on the lower right sleeve of our uniforms.

Arnold France ’43

New York City

**Q&C & ‘Jeopardy!’**

I greatly enjoyed the “Jeopardy!” story (Spring 2011 issue) about the QC professor’s role in creating the computer voice of Watson. It should be noted that there was an earlier human QC voice: that of Frank Spangenberg ’62, who was a “Jeopardy!” champion. He first appeared in 1990, winning $102,597. In five appearances in “Jeopardy!” tournaments over the years, he has won over a quarter of a million dollars.

Joe Bronack ’55

Aviation Executive Director of Airways Affairs & Events

New York

Send your letters to: Queens: The Magazine of Queens College, 51-10 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11367 or qmag@qc.cuny.edu.

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**Enriching the College’s Middle Eastern Offerings**

The Iraqi-born alum owns the world’s largest private collection of Islamic art, including the example of early 20th-century Christian calligraphy at left.

“The Nasser D. Khalili Professorship will allow us to attract a major scholar as the college’s chair, with Dr. Khalili’s assistance, moves toward establishing a chair in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies,” says President James M. Beriro. “We are very grateful to Professor Khalili for his generosity and his pursuit of peace among people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, which aligns perfectly with the college’s mission.”

Meanwhile, the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation—established by the husband-and-wife team behind the Rubin Museum of Art—has contributed a 21st-century gift: a website devoted to the arts of the Islamic world (www.srf2000islamicworld.org). Filled with images from the Khalili Collections, this virtual, interactive museum was transferred to QC to further the study of Islamic arts.

**CLARIFICATION**

In our Spring 2011 issue in a story about Homecoming 2010, one of our alumni lamented that there are no longer any fraternities on campus. Lament no more. We did and do still have a number of fraternities and sororities at Queens College.

**QUEENS NEWS**

Two substantial gifts will help QC expand its offerings in Middle Eastern studies, building on existing courses in languages, history, and culture. Nasser Khalili ’74 (right), co-founder and chairman of the Maimonides Foundation—a London-based organization that promotes peace and understanding among Jews, Christians, and Muslims—has donated generously to support a visiting professorship in Islamic art, with an emphasis on Islamic art.

**QC’s Rock Collection Finds a Home at American Museum of Natural History**

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, Eugene Alexandrov, then a professor of economic geology at QC, regularly led student field trips to mines and rock quarries throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe, where they collected mineral and ore samples. Before retiring in the early 1980s, Alexandrov—who was in his 90s, meticulously numbered, labeled, and cataloged the specimens—more than 5,000 in all—and assembled them into “a spectacular collection,” according to Allan Ludman, chair of QC’s School of Earth and Environmental Sciences (SEES). (Gold, silver, copper, platinum, chromium, asbestos, trace elements of rare metals, one-of-a-kind crystals—you name it, the collection had it.)

But last year, with storage space in desperately short supply, Ludman and his colleagues faced a hard decision: The collection would have to go. “But there was no way we would discard or break the collection up,” Ludman says. “We needed to find a new home for it.” With mining activity in the U.S. today a shadow of what it was a generation ago, he adds, “this is a collection that can’t be duplicated.”

So last fall, SEES asked the American Museum of Natural History if it was interested in acquiring the collection. The museum’s curator of mineralogy came to the school, looked over the holdings, and said yes.

The transfer took place in the first week of August. “This was an intricate operation,” Ludman says. “The rocks are stored in 15 metal cabinets, each weighing at least a ton and essentially unmovable.” So nine workers from a moving company emptied drawers from the cabinets, carefully labeling, wrapping, and boxing each specimen. The preparations lightened the cabinets enough to move them onto a truck for a 90-minute trip to Brooklyn, later they’ll be taken to the museum for research and display.

Once it is settled in its new home, the collection will initially be used for research. If it is placed on exhibit, it will be labeled: “Eugene Alexandrov Mineral Collection: Queens College of the City University of New York,” per an agreement between QC and the museum.

The transfer of the collection frees much needed storage space, but marks a bittersweet transition for those with warm memories of Alexandrov. “Eugene is a big, gruff, Russian bear with a heart of gold,” says Ludman. “Generations of students accompanied him on his field trips and he remains a beloved figure to this day. His collection was a true labor of love and we’re sad to see it go. But we’re happy that it’s going to a good home.”

**QUEENS MAILBAG**

Alan Rea ’55 graduated with a BA in economics and was awarded a commission in the Air Force. He and his wife, Dorothy, Hanukkah ’55 (now Fabian), had a daughter, Cecelia. On May 24, 1957, Lt. Rea was killed when his F-100 Sabre jet crashed near Soesterberg Air Base in The Netherlands. In his last radio transmission, he told the traffic tower that he wouldn’t “ditch” his malfunctioning plane because it was headed for people on the ground, by staying with his plane until the end, he was able to avoid crashing it into a “ditch” his malfunctioning plane because it was headed for people on the ground, thereby saving hundreds of lives.

Lt. Rea was the first QC graduate of the Air Force ROTC to die in the line of duty. A year later, the AFROTC building was renamed Alan Rea Hall, with a dedication ceremony attended by U.S. ambassador to The Netherlands, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the commander of the U.S. Air Force in Europe. A memorial plaque was donated by Lt. Rea’s Beta Phi fraternity brothers. The AFROTC program was phased out in 1959, after producing more than 200 U.S. Air Force officers. The building was renamed to make way for parking for the rapidly expanding campus population.

—Editor
At age 15 when I discovered the great Louis Armstrong, I had no idea that I entered a love affair which would last the rest of my life,” once wrote Gosta Hägglöf, a Swedish banker who devoted 60 years to preserving the legacy of his musical idol. Hägglöf met Armstrong on several occasions and enjoyed a friendship that lasted until Satchmo’s death in 1971. By the time Hägglöf died in 2009, he had amassed thousands of rare recordings by Armstrong from all over the world—some had never been commercially re-released—as well as videos, photographs, personal correspondence, and unique memorabilia, which he bequeathed to the Louis Armstrong House Museum (LAHM), the world’s largest archives dedicated to a single jazz musician. (QC administers the museum.)

LAHM director Michael Cogswell noted that it took four-and-a-half days to box Hägglöf’s collection to prepare it for shipment to America. Rodney Ricciard, the museum’s project archivist and an Armstrong scholar, has been entrusted with cataloging the collection—some 72 cartons—which is expected to take two years. Among the one-of-a-kind items in the collection are 17 CDs Hägglöf made from acetate records of a 1947 Boston concert of Satchmos at Symphony Hall. Another rare find was a CD Hägglöf produced on his own Ambassador label of the best dance selections performed live at the Cotton Club by Armstrong’s big bands from 1939-40. Both of these CDs can be purchased exclusively at the LAHM.

Kapsis Organizes Film Retrospective at MoMA

“Bob Kapsis is truly passionate about the cinema, and what is wonderful is his willingness and desire to share his knowledge and insights. That’s what Laurence Kardish, senior curator in the department of film at the museum of Modern Art, said about Robert Kapsis (Sociology and Film Studies).

Kapsis, along with curator Charles Silver of MoMA’s department of film, co-organized Robert Kapsis The Power to Endure, which took place in April at the museum. This film exhibition was the first major career retrospective on Kapsis, whom Kapsis describes in his book Charles Burnett Interviews (University Press of Mississippi), as “a groundbreaking African American filmmaker and one of this country’s greatest directors, yet he remains largely unknown. His films, most notably Killer of Sheep (1977) and To Sleep with Anger (1990), are considered classics, yet few filmgoers have seen them or heard of Burnett.”

The exhibition presented 20 of Burnett’s films, including feature films, student shorts, made-for-television movies, and documentaries, all of which explore some aspect of the African-American experience in America. Among them were The Redemption of fish (1999), Nomad: The Struggle for Liberation (2007), and Burnett’s first studio-produced feature film, The Glass Shield (1994). Kapsis’ book served as the impetus for the exhibition. “I approached MoMA with this idea to coincide the exhibition with my book, and they liked it,” says Kapsis. When he first came upon the films of Burnett, Kapsis could not believe he had not heard of this master filmmaker. “I was amazed his work is a reaction to the stereotyped representation of African Americans, especially films in the 1970s that were filled with drug dealers, prostitutes, and pimps.”

Nobelist Orhan Pamuk Returns to Campus

Turkey’s celebrated writer Orhan Pamuk—whose accolades include the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature—returned to Queens College October 17 as part of the Year of Turkey celebrations. Billed as “A Conversation with Students,” Pamuk spoke in nearly perfect English to a more-than-capacity audience at Campbell Dome (including substantial numbers of faculty and staff) with a soft, lilting cadence that held those gathered in rapt attention. Pamuk noted that, when young, his inclination was to become a painter. But raised in a family of civil engineers, he explained, “It was decided that since I was thearty boy in the family, I would become an architect.” Consequently, he enrolled in Istanbul Technical University only to drop out after three years. Despite his immersion in the visually centered disciplines of painting and architecture, he elected instead to try writing books that he believed “would address both the verbal and visual imagination.” Indeed, Pamuk says writing is a profoundly visual process: “I am always imagining at first a picture in my mind. I pick out verbs that will help the reader to form the same picture in their mind.”

Some of his remarks elicited laughter, such as his observation that, “In the end, writing a novel is composing some music while you don’t know what you’re doing, you don’t want to know what you’re doing... But in five years I’m going to teach why I did it.”

Pamuk’s celebrated works include the novels Snow and My Name is Red and the memoir Istanbul. He previously was at QC in November 2006, in what proved to be serendipitous scheduling, his appearance as part of the college’s Evening Readings series occurred just weeks after his being awarded the Nobel Prize.

Winning Reviews for Queens College

Once again, the Princeton Review has named QC one of the country’s top undergraduate institutions. The renowned education services company features Queens in the 2012 edition of its annual college guide, The Best 376 Colleges, and in its 2012 Best in the Northeast. In a nod to our extraordinarily diverse learning environment, the college ranked 1st in the United States for “Lots of Race/Class Interaction.” This category reflects how frequently and easily students from different class and ethnic backgrounds interact with one another.

QC saw improvement in our Quality of Life ranking, outperforming Fordham University, St. John's University, Hofstra, Cooper Union, Bard College, and all the SUNY colleges. That's no mean feat, given our consistent top-20 finish in three other categories: “Got Mi,” which lists campuses where beer is scarce; “Scotch and Soba,” which lists campuses where the student body is sociable; “Stone-Cold sober schools,” which is based on a combination of survey questions concerning the use of alcohol and drugs, hours of study each day, and the popularity of the Greek system.

Meanwhile, a report by the Education Trust, a research and advocacy group, identified QC as one of only five U.S. schools that do a good job of serving low-income students. The group evaluated 1,186 four-year colleges, looking for institutions where tuition does not exceed $4,600 a year after factoring in all grants for undergraduates from households earning up to $30,000 a year. In addition, half or more of the students have to graduate within six years, and at least 30 percent of the enrollees have to be on Pell grants.

Notes of Thanks

The generosity of an admirer of QC’s Aaron Copland School of Music is much appreciated by (l to r) Jin-Xiang “JX” Yu, Miguel Tepale, and Gary Garzetta. The singer, percussionist, and bass trombonist received scholarships made possible by the $1.6 million bequest of Forest Hills resident Beatrice Schachter-Meyer, a union musician who was no doubt impressed by the highly regarded program. QC will name the Black Box Theater in the Music Building in her honor.
Starr Reporter Enters Eighth Decade on the Beat

Last July friends and colleagues joined 89-year-old newspaperman David Starr ’42 and his wife Peggy (Giffen) Starr ’42 in the big conference room at the Springfield Republican in Springfield, MA to celebrate a remarkable milestone: his 70th year in the newspaper business—all with Newhouse, the newspaper publishing division of Advance Publications.

“I knew in the fifth grade I was going to be a newspaperman,” Starr says, recounting how he routinely read all 13 of the New York dailies sold at his father’s candy store. “I just became enamored of newspapers and what they accomplished and what a reporter was able to do.”

Following graduation from Richmond Hill High School—where he had been editor of the school newspaper—he enrolled at Queens as an economics major. “I thought economics was the most useful study for a newspaper editor,” he says. “But I ended up in journalism because the student-run Cornell University publication was considered racy by the day’s standards. ‘I figured I’d better read it before it came out,’ he says, explaining that the student-run Cornell University publication was considered racy by the day’s standards. “I figured I’d better read it before it came out.”

As a student, he legally changed his name from Sinowitz to Starr. “He said to me, ‘That’s a pretty good story and I’ll give you a byline, but I don’t give bylines to college kids,’” he says, standing in the city room at that moment was Martin Starr, the press agent for the World’s Fair. “The editor said to me, ‘How do you like the name David Starr?’ I shrugged. I didn’t care.”

But a few years and many bylines later, he found a good reason to care. “He was about to join the Army and didn’t look forward to the anti-Semitism that still plagued the country,” he says. In November 1942 Starr was sent to Massachusetts to take over a group of publications struggling in a depressed local economy. They survive today as the Springfield Republican and the website MassLive.com. The surrounding area has rebounded in no small part due to the exceptional level of civic interest demonstrated by Starr and his wife.

Their philanthropic activities on behalf of local cultural institutions have been widely applauded. When saluting their gift toward the creation of a broadcast center for the local public radio station, WFCR General Manager Martin Miller said, “Very few people can stand shoulder to shoulder with Peggy and David Starr in their support, commitment, and demand for excellence. But because of them and through them we are all better citizens, living in an area made better because of their work.”

Despite predictions of their eventual demise as a feature of the American landscape, Starr remains cautiously optimistic about newspapers. “Remarkeable for a man about to enter his tenth decade, he has spent the past decade developing strategies to help the Newhouse papers survive in an age where the Internet offers people thousands of other ways of getting information.”

“Our job,” he says, “is to persuade the public that we’re still the best, most trustworthy, most reliable, non-partisan and accurate gatherer of information.”

It’s a job David Starr’s been doing for 70 years.

Well-wishers joined 89-year-old editor David Starr and his wife Peggy to celebrate his 70th year with Newhouse Newspapers.

Groomed for advancement within Newhouse, Starr worked for a time at the Newark Star-Ledger as understudy to the senior editor of the Long Island Press in 1946, and in 1971 was named senior editor of the Newhouse Group, a title he retains to this day.

When the Long Island Press folded in 1977, Starr was sent to Massachusetts to take over a group of publications struggling in a depressed local economy. They survive today as the Springfield Republican and the website MassLive.com. The surrounding area has rebounded in no small part due to the exceptional level of civic interest demonstrated by Starr and his wife.

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–Bob Suter
By Merri Rosenberg

*Their journeys started in the boroughs of New York City, informed by collective experiences like the Great Depression and their identities as children of immigrants. World War II would shape the immediate post-graduation plans of the 197 students who graduated in 1941 as part of Queens College’s first class, who originally numbered 400 when they entered in the fall of 1937. Several members of that first graduating class returned to campus this past Commencement to celebrate their milestone 70th graduation. Below are some of their stories.*

**GEORGE SCHERR**
Born in Harlem, George Scherr commuted to Queens from the Bronx. Even though Scherr recalls “showing up for the first day of classes with no blackboards; we had classes outside in the Quadrangle,” Queens College was more than worth the inconvenience and the daunting commute.

A biology and chemistry major as an undergraduate, Scherr found time to be vice president of the Pre-medical Society, president of the Chemical Society, and vice president of the Alpha Gamma fraternity. He went on to receive his MA and PhD from the University of Kentucky. During World War II, where he was trained in international Morse Code, Scherr taught cryptography to the air force. He also served as a rifleman and worked on a secret project in germ warfare, a fitting assignment for someone who was a micro-bacteriologist. Now living in Park Forest, IL, Scherr was a tenured microbiology/infectious disease professor at the University of Illinois Medical School.

**JOHN KINDER**
His studies at Queens College were a significant influence on John Kinder, who was a mathematics major from St. Albans. He also was a member of the orchestra, Mathematics Club, and Phi Kappa Rho fraternity as an undergraduate.

Drafted into the army in September 1941, shortly after graduation, Kinder served in the Pacific and left the army as a first lieutenant. His mathematics background served him well in the artillery. He remained in the reserves, where he was promoted from captain to major. Professionally, Kinder pursued computer programming, which led to his successful career in life insurance. Now living in Wantagh, NY, he is a retired vice president of the Adirondack Life Insurance Company in Uniondale, NY.

**BERNICE ALTARAC**
Her 40-year career as an elementary school teacher in Long Beach, NY, was launched at Queens College. An encounter with the college’s first president, Paul Klapper, helped guide her career path. “He said, ‘If you want a way to be a kindergarden teacher, do elementary education,’” Altarac recalls, still marveling that “we sat as though he was not the president of the college.” A graduate of Long Beach High School, Altarac also remembers that “we were poor kids.” But that didn’t matter when she arrived at Queens College, where “supplies were so limited that for a phys ed course there was one golf stick for 15 kids. We took turns. I never got the ball off the tee.”

Nevertheless, despite the lack of supplies, a lunchroom, or cafeteria, “we thought it was heaven,” says Altarac. “We were so happy to have a college to go to.” A French major as an undergraduate, she was a member of the Education Council, Inter-Fraternity Council, French Club, and Menorah Society, chairman of the Ring Committee, and chancellor of the Phi Tau Alpha sorority. Altarac, who taught education classes for two years at QC, is still an adjunct professor of education at SUNY/Old Westbury. Widowed since 1984, she has one daughter and lives in North Island Park, NY.

**HULDA C. KASE**
A graduate of Long Beach High School, Kase also was a member of the orchestra, Mathemat-rics Club, and Phi Kappa Rho fraternity as an undergraduate. Drafted into the army in September 1941, shortly after graduation, Kase served in the Pacific and left the army as a first lieutenant. His military background served him well in the artillery. He remained in the reserves, where he was promoted from captain to major. Professionally, Kase pursued computer programming, which led to his successful career in life insurance. Now living in Fresh Meadows, NY, Kase is a retired vice president of the Adirondack Life Insurance Company in Uniondale, NY.

**BETTY STEINHORN**
Was only 16 when she entered Queens College. Raised in Sunny side and now living in Fresh Meadows, NY, Steinhorn says that much of her undergraduate experience was defined by her acceptance into the Iota Alpha Pi sorority. “Being accepted there was quite a thrill,” she says. “I was a sorority girl. That was my life.” Steinhorn was also treasurer of the Menorah Society and a member of the Junior Prom Committee and the Anthropology Club.

**GUY RICCIo**
Another French major, Guy Riccio commuted to the college from Elmhurst in a Model A Ford. “It was an experience to drive to college,” Riccio says. “I’d park at the top of the hill. When the battery died, I’d start the car and then roll down the hill.” He served as president of the Italian Club, secretary of the Alpha Lambda Kappa fraternity, and was a member of the French Club and Newman Club. Not surprising then that Riccio later earned a master’s degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in Spanish, Portuguese, and Romance Languages, and ultimately enjoyed an academic career as a professor at the University of Wisconsin and the University of Maryland-Baltimore.

Riccio joined the navy a year after Pearl Harbor, where he was selected for a special training program in Japanese. He then served as a Japanese language officer in the Pacific theatre for 14 months. Riccio extended his stay in the navy to be an officer instructor at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, ultimately receiving a civilian appointment, and taught in the foreign language department. He now lives in Annapolis, where he is active with the Historic Annapolis Foundation and the American Red Cross.

**HASKEL KASE**
Proud veteran Haskel Kase served in the air force in Europe during World War II. A history major, Kase commuted to Queens College from the Bronx. Now retired (“I’d rather not be,” he said from the Manjim Company, his own mail order business, Kase lives in Fort Lee, NJ. Looking back, “we made do,” says Kase. “It wasn’t the best of times [with the Depression and the war, but] we had a very small community and a great faculty.”

Snapshots of formal and informal events on campus, from the first issue of QC’s yearbook, Silhouette.
Jean-Claude Brizard Takes the Helm in the Windy City

By Donna Shoemaker

On May 26, Jean-Claude Brizard ’85, 90 MS, Ed, the controversial choice for CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, spent his first morning back in the classroom. The former science teacher bent his 6-foot-5 frame down to observe laptop science at the elementary school level and later talked with 8th graders and chemistry students about their lives.

A reformer and champion of an all-out campaign to save a generation of students, Brizard planned to visit a school a day during his listening sessions with stakeholders. While touring the Intell scholarship winners, “we can’t forget about the kids who are struggling to survive,” he emphasized during a phone interview.

Science classes and labs are familiar turf. “One thing I learned as a chemistry major at Queens College is that systems are the answer,” the CEO says. He also holds a master’s degree in science education from QC and a master’s in school administration and supervision from City College of New York. “I’m a proponent of choice, but for many parents, it’s a false choice,” says Brizard, noting that many can access the profession and find ways for “a concrete dialogue to take place.”

In April, when the Chicago Board of Education appointed Brizard as CEO of its much larger system, former Obama White House Chief of Staff and Chicago Mayor-elect Rahm Emanuel commented: “He’s not afraid of tough choices, and that is what Chicago’s students need today.” Frying pan, meet the fire. The Rochester district has 32,000 students, 52 percent of its 58 schools don’t meet federal testing standards, and 92 percent of its high school graduates in 2009 were minorities. The Chicago district has 409,278 students, almost 90 percent minority, and 80 percent of its 675 schools fell short of those federal standards.

Knowing what it’s like to live in public housing and be bullied, Brizard is keenly aware of the value of mentors and education in steering for the stars. That has increased his determination to close the opportunity gap.

In Haiti, where Brizard was born, his father was a principal and his mother a teacher. Fearing imprisonment under dictator François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, they fled to the United States in 1970. Unable to bring their three children, the couple left them in Haiti with their grandmother and aunt for six years. When Brizard was 12, the family settled in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and later in Queens. His parents’ “teaching credentials didn’t mean a lot” here, Brizard says, so his father worked in a factory, an airport, and public transit, and his mother became a nurse’s aide.

Brizard did well at Springfield Gardens HS, graduating at 16. He went to Brooklyn College. “I got there by accident, but I had a fantastic experience and loved the quantitative nature of the physical sciences. There were courses at Queens that really beat me up, but I came back at it. I never gave up.”

“I fell into teaching because my mom convinced me to give it a shot,” observes Brizard. In 1985, the New York schools deployed him to Rikers Island to teach detainees. There, “I saw what happens when the system did not work for kids—not just the educational system but the entire society,” he recalls. “Somehow, it gave me not just the courage but the moral imperative” to teach. “When I went to Rochester, one of the first places I visited was the county jail. It reminds you of how important this work is.”

In Chicago, Brizard faces a massive budget deficit and a possible teachers union battle. High priorities for him are performance-based leadership rewards, “really changing the way we look at teacher education,” and “leveraging the profession.”

“The U.S. has a 19th-century educational model, and it’s not working,” he states candidly. He wants his team to consider the next-generation classroom to reach young people immersed in multimedia. He has half-seriously proposed to his leadership team that “we should all put our kids in the worst school in the city.”

During listening sessions, Chicago’s superintendent of schools meets his most important constituents: students.

“We can bring a level of coherence and consistency to how we do things—fix the system, make it work—this district will be one of the best in the country.”

Rochester. “I’m a huge proponent of choice, but for many parents, it’s a false choice,” says Brizard, noting that many can access the next-generation classroom to much young people immersed in multimedia. He has half-seriously proposed to his leadership team that “we should all put our kids in the worst school in the city and force it to become better.”

For any public figure “in this kind of environment,” says Brizard, “it’s too easy to get lost. I try to stay very, very grounded.” That is, except when he is making use of his personal pilot’s license. Being a father and husband definitely helps that balance. The couple has an 18-month-old son; Brizard also has a 10-year-old daughter from his first marriage.

Thinking of every American’s child, Brizard says that if he could do one thing to change public education, it would be to “stop the infighting,” to reduce “the angot and division within the profession” and find ways for “a concrete dialogue to take place.” In Chicago, “not much has been done with how teachers connect. If we can do that well, bring a level of coherence and consistency to how we do things, fix the system, make it work, this district will be one of the best in the country.”

O

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In April, when the Chicago Board of Education appointed Brizard as CEO of its much larger system, former Obama White House Chief of Staff and Chicago Mayor-elect Rahm Emanuel commented: “He’s not afraid of tough choices, and that is what Chicago’s students need today.” Frying pan, meet the fire. The Rochester district has 32,000 students, 52 percent of its 58 schools don’t meet federal testing standards, and 92 percent of its high school graduates in 2009 were minorities. The Chicago district has 409,278 students, almost 90 percent minority, and 80 percent of its 675 schools fell short of those federal standards.

Knowing what it’s like to live in public housing and be bullied, Brizard is keenly aware of the value of mentors and education in steering for the stars. That has increased his determination to close the opportunity gap.

In Haiti, where Brizard was born, his father was a principal and his mother a teacher. Fearing imprisonment under dictator François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, they fled to the United States in 1970. Unable to bring their three children, the couple left them in Haiti with their grandmother and aunt for six years. When Brizard was 12, the family settled in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and later in Queens. His parents’ “teaching credentials didn’t mean a lot” here, Brizard says, so his father worked in a factory, an airport, and public transit, and his mother became a nurse’s aide.

Brizard did well at Springfield Gardens HS, graduating at 16. He went to Brooklyn College. “I got there by accident, but I had a fantastic experience and loved the quantitative nature of the physical sciences. There were courses at Queens that really beat me up, but I came back at it. I never gave up.”

“I fell into teaching because my mom convinced me to give it a shot,” observes Brizard. In 1985, the New York schools deployed him to Rikers Island to teach detainees. There, “I saw what happens when the system did not work for kids—not just the educational system but the entire society,” he recalls. “Somehow, it gave me not just the courage but the moral imperative” to teach. “When I went to Rochester, one of the first places I visited was the county jail. It reminds you of how important this work is.”

In Chicago, Brizard faces a massive budget deficit and a possible teachers union battle. High priorities for him are performance-based leadership rewards, “really changing the way we look at teacher education,” and “leveraging the profession.”

“The U.S. has a 19th-century educational model, and it’s not working,” he states candidly. He wants his team to consider the next-generation classroom to reach young people immersed in multimedia. He has half-seriously proposed to his leadership team that “we should all put our kids in the worst school in the city.”

For any public figure “in this kind of environment,” says Brizard, “it’s too easy to get lost. I try to stay very, very grounded.” That is, except when he is making use of his personal pilot’s license. Being a father and husband definitely helps that balance. The couple has an 18-month-old son; Brizard also has a 10-year-old daughter from his first marriage.

Thinking of every American’s child, Brizard says that if he could do one thing to change public education, it would be to “stop the infighting,” to reduce “the angot and division within the profession” and find ways for “a concrete dialogue to take place.” In Chicago, “not much has been done with how teachers connect. If we can do that well, bring a level of coherence and consistency to how we do things, fix the system, make it work, this district will be one of the best in the country.”

O
A Mater of Scholarship

Helen Cairns nurtured leaders in the field of psycholinguistics

By Donna Shoemaker

Helen Cairns nurtured leaders in the field of psycholinguistics. She was a Mater of scholarship—she did. The professor Smith Cairns! "Oh, you want to be Helen Smith Cairns!" the professor exclaimed. She did.

By Donna Shoemaker

Helen Cairns nurtured leaders in the field of psycholinguistics.

When a graduate student waiting for a bus with one of her professors, Ann Jablon remembers being asked, "What do you see yourself doing?" She launched into describing her ideal career: compassionate teacher, passionate researcher. "Oh, you want to be Helen Smith Cairns!" the professor exclaimed. She did.

Jablon (’71, ’86 CUNY PhD) calls Cairns, a QC professor emerita, "our academic mother." She notes, "It’s a wonderful phrase. It transcends the sense of mentor, the sense of nurture."

Cairns, who guided Jablon through all three of her degrees, "mothered" generations of QC students who have become highly productive in psycholinguistics and related fields. At Marymount Manhattan College, for example, Jablon is a professor of speech-language pathology and audiology and program chair of communication sciences and disorders.

In the mid-1960s, when Cairns was a senior at the University of Texas at Austin, a team of psycholinguists joined the faculty. "Absolutely blown away," by this brand-new field, she stayed for her PhD. Psycholinguistics, she explains, encompasses "the information-processing operations involved when one produces and understands sentences, first language acquisition by children, and second language acquisition by children and adults."

Cairns began by researching adult language processing. Then she changed her focus to the acquisition of syntax by children, and more recently to how young children develop the ability to think about language, to perceive sentences as ambiguous, to distinguish between grammatical and ungrammatical ones.

Much of her work took place at Bayside Nursery School. "The director, Lencore Rappaport (’74, ’81 MSED), was an extremely progressive, savvy educator who was delighted to have Queens College people doing research at her nursery school," Cairns says. "Many dissertations have come out of Bayside."

Coaxing preschoolers to stay the course on longitudinal studies was sometimes difficult. "Here would be this kid, bouncing off the walls, and I would try to get him to sit down to answer my questions," Cairns laughs.

Helen Cairns came to QC in 1971, when the department of communication arts and sciences (CAS) hired her at the same time her husband, Charles Cairns, joined QC’s new linguistics department. (His father, Stewart Cairns, a pioneering topologist, was one of QC’s original faculty members.)

Nearly a decade later, she agreed to be dean of graduate studies and research (1980-1989). Elected department chair three times, she presided over the reorganization of CAS into the departments of media studies and linguistics and communications disorders, chairing the latter department from 1997 to 2003. She and her husband retired together in 2004.

Cairns directed 21 dissertations and one thesis; her students are mentoring a new generation of experts in linguistics and communications disorders.

Cairns has written or co-authored four books on psycholinguistics, most recently Fundamentals of Psycholinguistics, with co-author Eva Fernandez (Linguistics), which is used as a textbook in QC’s LCD Department. She co-edited three more, and published over 50 papers and reports, often with her students. "My doctoral students are my pride and joy," she enthuses. "People like Ann [Jablon] have made major contributions to the world."

Undergraduates marvel at the attention Cairns devoted to them. Amy Rakowsky Neeman ’79 signed up for independent study with Cairns, which led to a PhD at Brown University. Cairns "was so careful about making sure we understood things and that things are connected and that you could always see the bigger picture," says Neeman, who teaches literature, communications skills, ESL, and writing at Johnson & Wales University.

Susan Behrens ’80 was grateful that Cairns customized a CAS/linguistics major for her and served as her advisor. Behrens met Jablon when both were helping Cairns with research. In 1995, Jablon hired Behrens at Marymount Manhattan. "Every day when I’m sitting with a student," says Behrens, a professor of communication sciences and disorders, "I think, ‘This is what Helen was doing. She always had time for students.’"

Behrens’s recent book, Language in the Real World: An Introduction to Linguistics (co-edited with Judith A. Parker), features many Helenites. Cairns begins her introductory course with Cairns’ chapter on how children acquire language (co-authored with former PhD student Janine Graziano-King).

As grandmother and “academic mother,” Cairns rejoices in her expanding families. The Cairns, who live in New Hyde Park, NY, have four children and seven grandchildren. At age 72, she is active in the QC Retirees Association and stays involved with CUNY’s doctoral programs in linguistics and in speech, language, and hearing sciences. "My best friends," reports Cairns, "are my former students.”
This concern also played out in “Think Impact,” a project she did for her economics course. That was the Brookings Institution, where she landed in the office of Senior Fellow Alice Rivlin, whose career includes being founding director of the Congressional Budget Office and vice chair of the Federal Reserve.

It was during this experience that she realized she did not want to be a behavioral economist, but rather a policy economist. “I would be working on lab-related stuff, and we would talk about policy,” she says.

In the summer of 2010, to get “better technical skills,” Sonawane took an internship with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. “I wound up doing something completely different: working for a behavioral economist, Julian Jamison.”

He credits QC with helping him to write. “Queens helped me to focus and target my writing better.”

Sonawane’s Macaulay Honors College advisor Pamela Parente says Sonawane’s path to becoming student speaker for Commencement last June included stops at the office of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Brookings Institution, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, and President Barack Obama’s inauguration. The last experience—made possible when she won a CUNY-wide lottery—proved pivotal. “After going to the inauguration, I wanted to explore the city more, so I applied to intern at any think tank in DC. I applied to every one. I was incredibly lucky to get a position right where I wanted one.”

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Sonawane’s senior thesis carries that interest forward. “It’s about the over-extension in mortgage-to-income ratios among minorities prior to the housing crisis,” she explains. “It illuminated how the spike in foreclosures contributed to the spike in foreclosures. “It was always interesting in biology and chemistry and the human body,” says Noel, recalling Saturdays spent with his mother’s sister, a pediatrician for the national hospital in Port-au-Prince. “She exposed me to the field and I really grew to like it.”

Despite demands in the lab and on the playing field, where he captained the soccer team, Noel was committed to helping others, regularly tutoring students in French, Spanish, biology, and chemistry. He also traveled to hurricane-ravaged New Orleans as a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, and recently returned to the hospital environment as a volunteer at the Queens Hospital Center Emergency Room.

Noel has garnered several awards, including an American Heart Association Summer Research Fellowship, a CUNY International Student Essay Competition Award, and Region 15 Excellence in Sports and Academics Award.

His many efforts were rewarded with a full scholarship and stipend to the MDPDD program at Penn State.

A Passion for Playwriting

Jonathan Alexandratos

For Jonathan Alexandratos, graduating with an MFA in playwriting had more to do with finding an obsession than completing required coursework. Despite the fact he’s been writing plays since the sixth grade, Alexandratos never planned to pursue playwriting either academically or professionally. “I was always passionate about playwriting but considered it the same as playing with my action figures, more of a hobby than anything,” he recalls.

For a while it looked as if Alexandratos would spend most of his time studying law instead of story development. But he hated his three years as a paralegal in a midtown law firm. “I remembered working until 2 a.m. and thinking why?” He became more obsessed with playwriting.

As part of that obsession, Alexandratos—who wrote short stories, movie reviews, and even a “Star Trek” spoof early on—recently co-founded a nonprofit theatre company, Playsmiths, that includes an actor, a producer, and a director. “We found that companies in NYC lacked a comprehensive view of theatre and we tried to correct that,” he says.

He credits QC with helping him to write. “Queens helped me to focus and target my writing better.”

Alexandratos has already had several projects produced. In 2009 his play Death in Mozambique was produced at the Cherry Lane Theater in Manhattan, and another play, Red Christmas, was produced as part of the In a New York Minute Festival.

In addition to his work as a playwright, Alexandratos has a passion for education. He teaches English at QC and helps to coordinate the school’s MFA in art and MFA in writing project.

As for his future plans, Alexandratos says he’ll continue to write plays as well as explore teaching and tutoring wherever there might be a need. “I don’t want foreign students to be afraid of English classes,” he says. “I want to help bring foreign and ESL students into the educational process.”

–Phyllis Cohen-Stevens

Loving Numbers and Literature

Stacy-Ann Barnett

An accounting major with a minor in economics, Stacy-Ann Barnett says she will always be grateful to Queens College for igniting in her a passion for something that seems far removed from the world of numbers, literature.

“I always felt literature was very challenging,” she says, explaining how the logic she so easily found in math eluded her in the realm of words. “But I enjoy a challenge.

“Coming to Queens College and doing writing-intensive literature courses,” she continues, “I came to see that it was something I was good at. I eventually realized, quite ironically, literature is much like math; it does follow a pattern. It’s like knowing at the end of the movie this guy will die, but you have to be able to tell the story of how you got to that point.”

Barnett speaks glowingly of Noam Schindlin (English) and his enthusiasm for the material he taught in English 120. “He did a very good job of challenging us to express ourselves.”

Barnett works hard in general, as evident from her 3.79 GPA. Schindlin’s was one of the courses she took in the summer to complete her degree in four years while holding a full-time job. An adult student and mother of a 14-year-old daughter, Barnett, who lives in Jamaica, Queens, emigrated from the island of Jamaica with her mother and three of four younger brothers when she was 19.

On meeting her self-imposed deadline to graduate, she remarks, “I don’t have a social life, per se. I tell my daughter all the time that I don’t have time to waste. If you waste it, you never get it back.”

While that plans to take the CPA exam, “I do see myself more in a field like auditing, a field where I can interact more because I do think I’m a people person.”

And who knows? If there is a great novel still to be written about the interior life of a Certified Public Accountant, it may well be written by Barnett.

–Bob Suter

Seeking Economic Solutions

Anita Sonawane

Anita Sonawane’s path to becoming student speaker for Commencement last June included stops at the office of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Brookings Institution, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, and President Barack Obama’s inauguration. The last experience—made possible when she won a CUNY-wide lottery—proved pivotal. “After going to the inauguration, I wanted to explore the city more, so I applied to intern at any think tank in DC. I applied to every one. I was incredibly lucky to get a position right where I wanted one.”

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Faculty, staff, and students cover new educational territory when they head overseas for research and internships; last summer’s projects took participants to Asia, Europe, and Africa.

By Leslie Jay

QC’s spring semester had just ended when 14 faculty and staff—selected through a professional development program connected to the Year of China—regrouped in Chengdu, the capital of southwestern China’s Sichuan Province, for a two-week trip led by Marleen Kassel (Institutional Advancement/History) with the help of Mohamed Tabrani (Education Abroad). The QC team worked with counterparts at Sichuan University and stopped at places of cultural significance, including Dazu, site of rock carvings dating from the 9th to the 13th century.

Experiencing field work first-hand, students joined Alexander Bauer (Anthropology) at an archeological survey at Sinop, a historic Turkish port on the Black Sea coast. Meanwhile, other undergraduates learned about the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, saw Roman ruins on the Aegean Coast, and attended lectures at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul through QC’s first Study Abroad program in Turkey.

In 2010, John Waldman (Biology) journeyed to Mongolia to conduct preliminary research on taimen, which he describes as “a fish with crocodile tendencies.” A threatened member of the salmon and trout family, the taimen consumes small mammals and can weigh more than 100 pounds. Waldman—pictured with two examples that didn’t get away—returned to Mongolia last summer to continue his research, accompanied by QC biology major Ivana Roman ‘12. He documented their project on CUNY’s Decade of Science blog, which features dispatches from CUNY scientists on expeditions to the far ends of the earth.

With dual systems for the majority Muslim population and the small Serbian enclave within it, Bosnia is a logistical nightmare—and a fascinating destination for Julie George (Political Science), who studies ethnic conflict and state building in former Communist countries. “It’s stunning to realize just how complicated and difficult the politics are when former enemies are forced to collaborate,” she says. Emily Monaco ‘12, who went to Sarajevo with George, immersed herself in local life and practices, respectfully donning a scarf to attend a memorial service for people killed in the civil war (she’s at the far left in the photo).

Six QC students flew to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, to serve as interns in an English as a foreign language program hosted by the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization. The interns co-taught classes to children ranging in age from 7 to 15 and had the opportunity to tour the city and other attractions. “It was a pilot for paid international internships out of Queens College, and it was a joint effort of the Provost’s Office and the English Language Institute,” reports English Language Institute Director Donna Gruber. A second group of students will be chosen to go to Vietnam this year.

Rikki Asher (Secondary Education and Youth Services) and three fellow members of Brooklyn-based Artmakers Inc. made individual presentations at Ghana’s second Kumasi Biennial Symposium, a three-week event that’s concerned with the gap among contemporary African artists, the international artist community, and rural areas. In connection with the symposium, Artmakers created a site-specific piece for rustic Abetenim Village, where Asher and her colleagues adorned three walls of a new multipurpose building with a mural and stencils.

Have Passport WILL TRAVEL

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Turkey is a country with a rich and diverse history, people, and environment. Throughout the 2011-2012 academic year, Queens College will present lectures, live performances, and art exhibits that will bring the many facets of Turkey: its politics, society, economy, ethnicity, art, literature, and music, and film.

The Prehistory of the Black Sea and the Interaction between Climate and Humans
Wednesday, February 8
12:15 pm, Powdermaker Hall

Traveling from Istanbul, choreographers and dancers Mustafa Kaplan, Ayş Orhon, and Filiz S banners create work that challenges perceptions of dance. Followed by a Q&A session moderated by Gurer Ertan.

Interwoven Worlds: Domestic and Nomadic Life in Turkey
Organized by the Gedikten-Berak Museum
March 9–April 20
Pulsing Town Hall
Queens, NY

Featuring the carpets and textiles for which the Turks are celebrated.

Turkish and English: Salient Differences in Sound, Word, and Sentence Structure
Wednesday, March 7, 12:15 pm; Powdermaker Hall, Room 156

Discussion of Jaklin Kornfilt’s forthcoming talk led by QC Linguists Prof. Robert Van Gorden.

Turkish: How a Language Migrated from Central Asia to the Mediterranean
Wednesday, March 14, 12:15 pm, Campbell Dome

Lecture by Jaklin Kornfilt, professor of linguistics at Sussia University and author of Turkish Grammar.

In Search of the Lowest Common Name for a People
Thursday, March 15, 12:15 pm, Powdermaker Hall

Professor Mark Rosenblum, director of the Department of Turkish Literature at Bilkent University and president of the UNICEF Turkish National Committee.

Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul
Wednesday, March 28, 12:15 pm, Powdermaker Hall, Room 154

Discussion of Tägil Helmar’s March 21 talk led by QC Anthropology Professor Alexander Bauer.

For Rent
Presented by Kupferberg Center and the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center at LaGuardia Community College
April 11–14 and 18–20
LaGuardia Performing Arts Center
Long Island City, NY
Tickets: $10
To order, call 718-462-5151

Written by acclaimed Turkish playwright Ozan Yildiz and directed by Handan Olgurin, this play explores the Istanbul’s criminal underworld through the desperate lives of the young people who flock there.

Zeynep Ucbasaran, Piano
Sunday, April 13, 2 pm, LeFrak Concert Hall
Tickets: $36/34/adults
To order, call 718-793-8080.


In researching his landmark series “Jazz” for public TV, filmmaker Ken Burns came to the inescapable conclusion that Louis Armstrong was the most important figure in the development of America’s indigenous art form. If anyone else remains to be persuaded, they need only read Ricky Riccardi’s “Louis Armstrong House Museum” What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong’s Later Years (Pantheon). Jazz historian and archivist, Riccardi reconstructed “Satchmo’s Life Story” for a multi-disciplinary exhibition.

Armenia and Turkey
Wednesday, April 25, 12:15 pm, Campbell Dome, Room 156

Discussion led by QC History Professor Mark Rosenblum.

Amulet, Nazars & Evil Eye Exhibits

Anzures, Nazars & Evil Eye Exhibits

Inux: Turkish Contemporary Dance
Saturday, February 25, 8 pm, Goldstein Theatre

Exploring Past, Present, Future

City of Cities: Byantium, Constantinople, Istanbul
Wednesday, May 31, 12:15 pm, Campbell Dome Lecture by Talia Helmar, professor and chairman of the Department of Turkish Literature at Bilkent University and president of the UNICEF Turkish National Committee.

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Amulet, Nazars & Evil Eyes: Artists Looking Forward
May 2–June 30
Queens College Art Center
For more information call 718-997-3770.

Contemporary artists, writers, and musicians explore the Turkish evil eye and find commonality within their own culture. Curated by Taira Mathison.

Gumbo. Hoppin’ John. Barbecued ribs. Since colonial times, American cuisine has owed a huge debt to the palates and kitchen talents of African Americans. As Jessica Harris (SEEk, English) explains in High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America (Bloomberg), the trend began abroad slave ships. Larders were stocked with ingredients familiar to the captives, who were considered valuable cargo and often ate better than crewmen. After they were purchased, slaves lived on subsistence diets, supplementing their rations with whatever they could raise or catch and turning discarded animal parts into delicacies. Food provided an avenue for advancement at every economic level. Slaves sold produce and homemade goods at markets, supplementing most of the proceeds back to their owners; caterers, both enslaved and freed, became anchors of their communities. High on the Hog tracks this complicated story through several hundred years, acquainting readers with individuals like George Washington’s chef cook and kitchen manager, Hercules, whose escapes devastated the first president’s household.

Winner of the Gregory Bateson Book Prize from the Society of Cultural Anthropology.

A young couple poses before a historic backdrop depicting a modern building set in a volcanic landscape; a college student grabs his camera as he heads to a political demonstration; a man posses stiffly for his family photograph; an old woman leafs through a family album. In Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java (Duke University Press), Karen Strassler (Anthropology) argues that popular photographic practices such as these have played a crucial role in the making of modern national subjects in post-colonial Java. Contradicting that photographic genres cultivate distinctive ways of seeing and positioning oneself and others within the affective, ideological, and temporal location of Indonesia, she examines genres ranging from state identification photos to pictures documenting family rituals. (Examples appear throughout the text.) Strassler illuminates the ways that everyday photographic practices generate visual habits that in turn give rise to political subjects and communities.

If you have an outstanding talent, are you obliged to pursue it? And at what cost? Those are the questions facing Algera Katz, protagonist of Four Seasons (Knopf), the latest young adult novel by Jane Breskin Zalben. 71a prodigy who has been playing piano since she was four, Algera comes by her gifts honestly; She’s the daughter of a gifted pianist. But at 13, she is tiring of a life that revolves around school, constant practice and pressure, intensive training at Julliard, and little else. As a piano student herself, Zalben—an author/artist with more than 50 books to her credit—draws on her understanding of music and adolescence to create a memorable portrait of a conflicted wonderland.

Denied admission to Columbia University’s School of Journalism, Warren M. Phillips (Yale, 1955; Columbia, 1957) went on to land a reporting job with one of New York City’s daily newspapers. After seven refusals, including a bum’s rush from the newsroom of the Daily News, the Wall Street Journal—“a thin, one-hundred-thousand-circulation financial paper downtown at 44 Broad Street”—apparently saw something in him the others didn’t. Thus began the career Phillips recounts in Newspaperman: Inside the News Business at The Wall Street Journal (McGraw-Hill). Phillips reveals his passion for newspapers that began with a childhood tour of the New York Daily News. “From the huge revolving globe to the lobby to its reporters hunched over typewriters to its mammoth presses, all were suddenly seductive.” He spent 45 years at the paper, years that corresponded with its growth from a small financial daily into one of the world’s most important news providers with an average circulation of nearly 2 million. By the time Phillips retired in 1992, he had risen through a variety of reporting, editing, and management positions to become publisher of the Wall Street Journal and CEO of the paper’s parent company, Dow Jones & Company.
Linda (Friedman) Singer ’76 felt right at home at Queens College. Not only did her mother (Florence Friedman ’79) work and attend classes on campus, but also, her father (Bernard Friedman ’76) and her future husband (Mitch Singer ’76) graduated with her. “That gave me four extra years of friendship with my parents,” comments Singer, who majored in fine arts and minored in art education. “Quietly spreading the good—that’s what she was all about,” is how she sums up her mother. At QC in the 1970s and 1980s, Florence was an administrative assistant in psychology, assisted in the president’s office, and then worked for a series of social sciences deans. “I would stop in and get a smile,” Singer recalls. “All my friends would stop in. She would give them a hug, a word of encouragement. She was going to college at night and understood the pressures.”

Enrolled in QC’s ACE Program, her mother studied liberal arts and her father accounting; both graduated with honors while persevering with parenting and jobs. “How in the world did she do it?” Singer wonders about a working mom who could put “beautiful meals on the table,” take her to operas, and write term papers long into the night. Singer’s father, a printing company comptroller, passed away in 1994 and her mother in 2008. In Florence’s honor, the Singers are investing in the college that “was such an important part of my mother’s life,” Singer observes. Their memorial fund at QC provides scholarships and supports new initiatives in the social sciences. Coming from a Bayside family that together mastered college life, Singer now thrives in a family business. Husband Mitch, a QC grad and employee, supports new initiatives in the social sciences. “I was intent on having my own career first,” she notes. “That’s why I do it now for the young people who come to work in PL Developments.” Her husband does likewise on the business side. The Singers recently brought on board two QC graphic arts graduates and a QC intern, and plan to recruit more alums.

Florence Friedman (l) graduated from QC after her daughter, Linda Friedman Singer (r), who established a fund in her memory.
Join Us This Spring! To purchase tickets or for more information, call 718.793.8080 or go to www.KupferbergCenter.org.
CHORAL CONDUCTOR LEADS RESONATING CAREER

With his baton, Harold Rosenbaum ’72, 74 MA directly both renowned soloists and amateur choirs from youth to seniors, up dazing heights. Over four decades he has sounded these high notes: choral conductor with 450-plus world premières and more than 1,500 conductors in over 50 states — including in six choral groups and maestro of about 30 others — collaborate with more than 100 leading orchestras, opera companies, and other ensembles. Associate professor of music at the University of Buffalo, faculty member at his alma mater (1972-1998) — namesake of the choral music series of the world’s largest music publisher, G. Schirmer. Music: QC, professor emeritus of music. Contemporary choral composers find in Rosenbaum and his New York Virtuoso Singers the ideal interpreters. This professional choral conductor which he founded in 1988, is undaunted by other groups. While he has commissioned 50 of today’s best choral composers, Rosenbaum also champions what he calls “the up-and-comers who need the money.” For his annual competition and from unsolicited tickets, each year he reviews 400 to 500 scores — 8,500 to “get immense pleasure in finding a jewel,” he says. “I always wonder why I have been allowed to live.”

Rosenbaum “has perfect pitch of a very highly refined nature,” says Raymond Erickson, QC professor emeritus of music, who has noticed undocumented health and health care issues in his choral groups and maestro of about 20 others. “He generously offers his time and expertise to the community on the way.”

In 1983, while studying in London, Rosenbaum went to hear Brahms’ Requiem. Transfixed during the soprano solo about paradise, he had a vision of their son’s soul “carried aloft in a ray of light.” He recalls, “I heard the next morning that he had died. He was my best friend.”

“Though the pain never goes away, the desire to survive with dignity and the need to do good deeds, and to make people happy, in my case through music, drive me forward.” — Donniesmailker

This past June, Queens College awarded him an honorary degree. “Music, what I live by, has been a component of my early life, in Flushing. His father was a musician and cousin of Victor Young, composer of ‘When I Fall in Love’ and other Hollywood favorites. He learned lessons at age four and in his youth earned $25 a year singing with a Jewish choir. In New York’s All-City Concert Choir he was one of 16 chosen for a summer music camp, direct from the university’s administration and art department. As a teen he would go to the piano, and dozens of kids would gather around him,” he remembers. “Name some songs, and I’ll play them,” he would say. “I didn’t know any classical music. To say Queens was a rigorous course of study is an understatement. I loved every minute of it. It opened up a world of music.”

When he was about to get his MA, Rosenbaum started a chamber choir. “I realized I needed to start my own church, to have my own instrument,” he relates. He advertised for amateur singers for Cant antic Novum Singers (www.canticantonnovum.org), now entering its 13th year. “I’ve worked with kids from other periods. Ranging Carnegie Recital Hall for its first concert “was brazen for a 23-year-old,” he realized. But from that first New York Times review in 1973 has risen a crescendo of acclaim.

Rosenbaum had organized a prep choir, too. With ecumenical enthusiasm, he brought together the QC Preparatory Choir, Transfiguration Lutheran Church Choir of Harlem, and Westchester Jewish Choral Society (which he also founded). Not on campus. In Carnegie Hall—to perform Haydn’s Creation. Among other concert highlights, the conductor cites his six Ravell premières in “to huge audiences,” and a tribute to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow with all five of the author’s greatest-grandchildren present. He is excited about being named lead choral conductor of Parma Recordings “because we’re going to be making so many CDs.” (Information about Rosenbaum’s many projects is at:QC.)


The future doctors Berman pause for a photo op, 1970s—

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they were formally admitted to Cornell Medical College. “I

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the founders of the Violet Quill, a

“the world would never forget the

“All my life I have been teaching—op-

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and the late
the QC art Center’s exhibition
Found
performed at heifer international’s
was in attendance). she also
gave a concert at ny’s steinway hall
has had a busy
new york City
type designer, calligrapher, and

To SPACE RACE
and triumphs leading up to it. he was interviewed widely in the
and an occasion for Cohen, now 83, to look back on the challenges
missions possible.” Computing, Cohen says, “was the silent partner.”
of the computer support that made Mercury and other space
flights for decades to come.

Cohen didn’t start out with his eyes on the stars. “i enrolled
in QC as a chemistry major in 1945 but left for the Army toward
the end of World War II,” he says. After resuming his studies in 1947,
he switched his major to math. When he wasn’t in class
studying, he played soccer and hung out with the Dead End Boys,
a non-Greek fraternity that drew members from all races,
religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Among his proudest
accomplishments at QC, he says “was being elected King of
the Campus in 1949.”

After graduating in 1950, Cohen worked as an actuary
and an economic analyst, eventually signing on with IBM’s now
applied science department in 1952. It was at the department’s
data-processing centers that he gained his first experience
using mathematics and computers, running literally hundreds of
different jobs, from market research to graminic analyses for
oil exploration. In 1959 he was named manager of the IBM Space
Computing Center in downtown Washington. His assignment Help
make Project Mercury happen.

Within a year, Cohen and most of his team relocated to NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, which had just been built in
Greenbelt, MD. “There was mud everywhere,” Cohen recalls. “The
bathrooms had no door; so I hung sheets of tarpaper over the entrance to provide some privacy.”

Cohen and his team did much of their work using two
transistorized IBM 7090 computers. their role would be
to determine flight trajectory parameters and the present position of
the spacecraft, allowing Mission Control at Cape Canaveral to make
the critical decisions required to ensure Shepard’s safe return.

Cohen led his team in developing systems that would drive and
control every aspect of the mission—launch, orbit, reentry, and, if
necessary, abort. All data about the spacecraft in flight, including its
position and speed, were tracked by radar on earth. “We were processing real-time asynchronous data from all over the world—
Bermuda, Africa, Australia, Hawaii,” Cohen says. the information
streaked in at the scorching rate of 1,000 bits per second. Today’s
wireless data move 5,000 times faster.

It all came down to the morning of May 2, 1961, when
the redstone rocket was slated to lift off. But poor weather forced
delays, and the launch was pushed back to May 5. Anxiety
was in the air—but it was the potential for hardware glitches, not
computer failures, that concerned Cohen.

“i had the privilege of working with a great team of people,” he
says. “But none of them are well-known, nor are many people aware
of the computer support that made Mercury and other space
missions possible.” Computing, Cohen says, “was the silent partner.”

in the late 1940s, Shapard propelled the
capital campaign has raised more than
$22 million despite the recession ... Rhonda Goldmintz Samuel
is executive director of the Integrated Medical Foundation in Melville, NY, which seeks to serve low income persons in areas
otherwise would be lost to prostate cancer. under her direction, IMP 
offers free educational programs, free cancer screenings, and support

Above: Art and Marion Pagel Cohen on campus opposite page: Cohen, fourth from left, with IBM and NASA personnel, including
economists Gus Grissom and dave slayton (8th and second from right).

nasa has accomplished,” Cohen says. “But they’re standing on the
shoulders of men and women who came before them, and
mathematics and computers played a key role.”

—Bruce fallout

Winner: Cohen, fourth from left, with IBM and NASA personnel, includ-
ing economists Gus Grissom and Dave Slayton (8th and second from right).

IBM recently opened a law firm, Haskel & Cohen, PA, in
Miami, Fl. ira, who has practiced intellectual property law for almost
30 years, also teaches business and constitutional law at the University of
phoenix at South Florida campus.

... Howie Scharff published a
wellness book with DVD, Stretches and smiles (court
international, 2011). it holds
on his personal experience with arthritis and the
pains of sports traumas, which led
him to return early from his dental practice and seek healing through
yoga. Howie is director of Your Call This Yoga, a nonprofit organization...

... Douglas Roll recently became
**THE RACHEL T. WEDDINGTON AWARD**

In the summer of 1963, 16 Queens College students, inspired by Professor Rachel T. Weddington, spent six weeks in Princeton, New Jersey, helping African-American children who had been deprived of school by four years because of “massive resistance” to school desegregation. Prof. Weddington, then one of the most distinguished professors at QC, helped to organize the summer’s activities and prepare us to teach. More important, she set a powerful example of commitment by staying with us throughout the summer’s activities and preparing us to teach.

**2021 Recipient:**

**Josephine Monahan**

Josephine Monahan joined the National Association of Hispanic Lawyers (NAHJ) in 1995. She has been involved in various leadership roles in the organization, including serving as the NAHJ’s 2006-2007 President. She is currently the Executive Director of the National Association of Hispanic Lawyers. Monahan has been recognized for her contributions to the legal profession and the community, receiving numerous awards and honors for her work. She has also been involved in various legal cases, including representing a client in a high-profile case that brought attention to the issue of immigration reform. Monahan is committed to advocating for the rights of all people, regardless of their background or circumstances.
Robert G. & Michelle Newman
David A. Heimowitz '78
Marsha Joy Baliff '65
Neil H. Offen '65
Rudolph E. Baker '59
Richard M. & Robin Altschuler
Frank A. & Carol Grossman
Susan Aprahamian
Kathleen P. Schuler '85
Benny Steinman '65
Dennis E. & Susan Silberman
Joseph '65
Seth J. & Clare Alliucci
Rachel S. & Bill Ackerman
John R. & Laura Adams
Robert '87
Robert E. & Carol Reissman
Michael P. & Adele Schwartz
Mark C. & Jane Hetherington
Brianne Gross Altman '41
James A. & Elizabeth R. Schajc
Harvey & Coral Wolf
Sgt. John D. & Diane J.
John M. & Amy Miller
Harold '78
Sandy & Nancy Rose
O'Day '92
Sgt. John D. & Donna L.
Russell '79
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Babaja '96 & Sarah Najem
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Student dancers who participated in the performing arts showcase take a break. 

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Lilyan Ama S. Wattley '92
Juanita Eva Ann Stern Doyle
Kevin M. Wadalavage '77
Geraldine
Samuel A. Wachtel '75
George Wachtel '60
Singer
Morton & Marcia
Gerald & Harriet
Karine
Robert J. '54 & Deanna
Christian D. '72 &
David '67 & Virginia
John R. Viola '79
Frank P. & Elizabeth
Joseph & Mildred A.
Anthony Michael
Harriette Vedder '63
Jedwabnik
John & Mira
Wachspress '44
Waanders '68
Von Gutfeld
Dehsen
Eleanora S. Von
Casalini
Vernick
Ventimiglia '68
Vellucci
Vorperian
Queens: The Magazine of Queens College
Shannon
Wade
Socol
Gary R. & Sheryl
Rhoda Weill
Bennie R. & Eleanor
Richard M. Walzer '66
Horn
Henry M. & Norma
Marc A. Wallman '63
Andrew A. Wallman '57
Cornelia
Michael L. Walker '03
John P. Walker
Mary E. Walicki '76
Herbert Waldren '79
John & Carol Waldman
Jessica
Flad

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Museum’s First Gala Rocks the House

Celebrating a quarter century of operations, the Louis Armstrong House Museum threw its first annual gala on December 6, 2011, honoring QC President James Muyskens, legendary jazz record producer George Avakian, and trumpet virtuoso Jon Faddis. Muyskens, Avakian, LAHM Director Michael Cogswell, Faddis, and LAHM Board President David Ostwald took a group bow, above; Faddis, who chose his instrument in childhood after seeing Satchmo on “The Ed Sullivan Show,” also provided music for the party. “Every cent we raise from this event will go to fund operations,” promised Cogswell. The next big fund-raising event for LAHM takes place in February with the auctioning of a painting of Louis (left), painted and donated by legendary singer Tony Bennett. Visit www.charitybuzz.com to place a bid.