



## **Joel Benenson '79: Helping Obama Win the White House**





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Cover: Joel Benenson and Barack Obama celebrate on Election Night. Photo courtesy of the Benenson family.

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QUEENS COLLEGE IS NY

### Mailbag

#### A Vote For

I was very impressed with the Fall–Winter issue of *Q Magazine*—far above most publications of this type that I receive. Thanks and kudos for a job well done!

Alice Schmitt Dashiell ’61  
Thomaston, ME

#### A Vote Against

It was disheartening to read the Fall–Winter 2008–09 *Q Magazine* article “Brain Man” by Leslie Jay. According to the article, “The Daily Show” anchor Jon Stewart suggested that Republicans had a spate of memory lapses and he therefore interviewed one of the nation’s top brain experts, Mony de Leon ’69, who sees a lot of people with “broken brains.” As both a graduate and a Republican, I find the article offensive and I’m quite sure it would never have been printed had it referred to the opposing political party. To quote an idiot like Jon Stewart is not only inappropriate but a waste of time. If we want to start quoting people in the *Q Magazine*, I’m sure we can find a good number of individuals worth quoting and who have actually contributed to society.

Institutions of higher learning such as Queens College should focus on educating students who want to learn and not picking political sides. Funding for such public institutions comes from both taxpayers and private contributions, both of which are comprised of Republicans and Democrats!

Dennis D. Sebastiano ’71  
Dix Hills, NY

#### Remembering Coach Tierney

I read with much interest in your Fall–Winter issue of the wonderful accomplishments of Dr. Al Kapikian. In it, he commended his baseball coach at QC, Bob

Tierney, who recently died. I played on the 1952 team with Al for Coach Tierney, and I would like to share with you excerpts from a letter I received from “Coach” in 1994 (when he was age 82) after a long period when we had lost contact.

“I have wonderful memories of my 35 years at Queens College, particularly the earlier ones. Even though I had a very successful and happy career, starting as a tutor in January 1941 and rising to a full professor in 1962, which included many years as department chairman and later director of athletics, my greatest love was as varsity baseball coach.

“It gave me the opportunity to know and to work with a fine group of young men for 26 seasons. A number of players over the years still keep in close touch—either with visitations or by mail and phone.



Tierney (see p. 9)

Locastro, Al Kapikian, Bob Mueller, Frank Saracino, Bob Krapp, John Constantini, Mel Seiden, Bill Delfyett, Lou DeBole, and so many others.

“As a non-scholarship college, we more than held our own with those who did give scholarships for baseball. In 26 seasons, we won 286 games and lost 242. I enjoyed every minute of every game (mostly, of course, those we won!).”

Win or lose, Coach Robert J. Tierney was a true mentor in life, as well as in baseball, and a very fine gentleman.

Bob Keane ’54  
Eastchester, NY

Send your letters to *Q Magazine*, Queens College, Kiely Hall 1307, Flushing, NY 11367 or [qmag@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:qmag@qc.cuny.edu).



## Stellar Choice for New College Provost



Stellar

After an extensive national search that brought four candidates to campus to meet the QC community, President James Muyskens announced that James Stellar will become the college's next provost. The former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Northeastern University, he will be replacing Evangelos Gizis, who is retiring.

"Jim Stellar is a dynamic and effective leader who has had a profound impact on Northeastern University," notes Muyskens. "He brings to us a wealth of experience and ideas that

will help us continue our momentum and achieve the goals of our strategic plan."

Northeastern's College of Arts and Sciences doubled its academic programs and tripled the number of freshman applications while Stellar served as dean from 1998 to 2008. He was instrumental in expanding the university's experience-based educational programs as supplements to classroom learning.

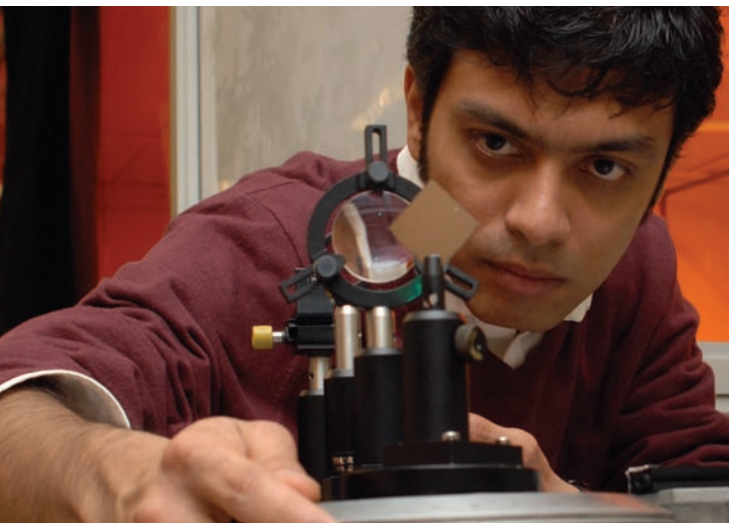
"I am very pleased to be joining the Queens College community," says Stellar. "I am impressed by the quality, mission, and

trajectory of the college and by the people whom I have met in the process of interviewing. I am honored and humbled by the opportunity."

Stellar earned his PhD in biological psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, which he followed with a post-doctorate from the same institution. He began his academic career as an assistant professor at Harvard University in the department of psychology and social relations. In 1985 he won the Phi Beta Kappa Outstanding Harvard Teacher of the Year Award. He also worked as a research affiliate in biochemistry at the McLean Hospital of Harvard Medical School before moving to Northeastern.

A teacher and researcher for three decades, Stellar helped students become enthusiastic and active learners, using laptop and web-based technology—including chat rooms—to prepare them for exams. His work in behavioral neuroscience has focused on the effect of addictive drugs on the motivational control circuits of the brain. Many of the students who served as undergraduate assistants in his laboratory were accepted to the country's top medical and graduate schools.

"As we look forward to a new chapter at Queens," Muyskens says, "I am most grateful for the impressive leadership Evangelos Gizis has provided. We are all beneficiaries of his good humor, his commitment to quality, and his sound judgment."



Nancy Bareis

Physicist Menon with his innovative laser

His findings were announced in the November 24 issue of *Optics Express*.

With further development, Menon believes, this laser has the potential to be used for such medical applications as "light bandages," which can promote faster wound healing. The device can also be used for display applications.

"The main structure of this laser is plastic, which is organic, while the light emission originates from inorganic nanomaterials," says Menon. He points out that plastics offer the mechanical flexibility while the inorganic materials give superior light emission—thus combining the advantages of both material systems. Traditionally, semiconductor lasers are made of either purely organic or inorganic materials.

Developed under a grant from the Army Research Office, this unique laser contains what may be the world's first flexible, light-trapping microcavity. Instead of costing \$150,000 to \$200,000 or more to make, the hybrid can be developed for less than \$10,000. Its production technique is so easy that one of the co-authors on the *Optics Express* paper was an undergraduate student at the time he worked on the project.

A native of India, Menon earned his PhD from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and conducted post-doctoral work at Princeton. He came to Queens College in 2004 through the City University of New York (CUNY) Photonics Initiative. He currently teaches undergraduate physics as well as advanced courses at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Menon co-authored the *Optics Express* article with his students, Matthew Luberto, then an undergraduate; Nikesh Valappil, a post-doctoral researcher; and graduate student Subhasish Chatterjee.

## Four QC Graduates Recognized at Grammy Awards

The Aaron Copland School of Music has many distinguished alumni, and the recent Grammy Awards ceremony recognized four of them:

Pianist, bandleader, and composer Arturo O'Farrill '00 received the Grammy for Best Latin Jazz Album of the Year for *Song for Chico*, which he recorded with the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra.

Conrad Herwig '05 was also recognized in this category. Both a bandleader and composer, Herwig was nominated for his album *The Latin Side of Wayne Shorter*, which he performed with the Latin Side Band.

Two Copland School graduates and one CUNY Distinguished Professor were recognized in the Classical Music Awards category:

Joann Falletta '78 is the conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, which performed *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan*, a work that was awarded a Grammy for Best New Classical Composition. The winning composer was Distinguished Professor John Corigliano of Lehman College. (The recording also received a Grammy for Best Vocal Performance by soprano Hila Plitman.) Corigliano beat out Copland School alumnus George Tsontakis ('84), whose Violin Concerto No. 2 was also nominated in the Best New Classical Composition category.

"The Aaron Copland School of Music has a strong, long-standing reputation in classical music performance and composition," says

ACSM Director Edward Smaldone.

"George Tsontakis studied composition with Hugo Weisgall, arguably the leading American composer of opera. JoAnn Falletta received an MA degree in guitar performance when her conducting career was just beginning. Our jazz program—whose formative faculty included Jimmy Heath and Sir Roland Hanna—has developed an international reputation. Its graduates are a force within the field and include five recent winners in the prestigious Thelonius Monk Competition."



Conductor Joann Falletta '78

## Print Ads Win Gold Award from Higher Education Organization

A series of print ads created by the Office of Communications has received the 2009 gold Accolades Award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the respected national organization for higher education professionals. The prize in the "special advertising programs" category was given by CASE District II, the largest of the eight geographic districts. "Your accomplishments in creative planning, production and promotion of programs merit the accolades and admiration of your peers," noted the CASE co-chair.

The ads employed a common headline "Queens College is the Place for . . ." followed by a different noun: "Achievement," "Inspiration," "Discovery," "Community," or "Change." Designed by Georgine Ingber (Design Services) to reflect the theme of the current banners on Kissena Boulevard and other streets bordering the campus, they were photographed by Nancy Bareis (Photo Services), with copy by Bob Suter (Editorial Services). Placements included such publications as *U.S. News and World Report*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and *Newsweek*.

The ad series and individual "Achievement" ad also received a Merit

citation from the Annual Admissions Advertising Awards, sponsored by Higher Education Marketing Report.



Nancy Bareis



Students with items from the Levy collection

## Alum Donates Civil Rights Collection to QC

Mark Levy '64, an activist in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, has donated his personal materials of that era to the college. This donation includes photographs, posters, buttons, letters, Mississippi student writings, and news clippings. They will be used to start the college's Civil Rights

Archive. The library will preserve, catalog, and make these documents available to students, faculty, and other researchers.

"The materials in Mark Levy's collection help us better understand the role played by students from the college during the civil rights movement, a time of great change and turmoil in our nation's history," notes Chief Librarian Robert Shaddy.

Levy, who recently retired as executive director of the medical residents' union CIR/SEIU, has been in contact with other 1960s alumni who are prepared to donate materials from their collections. (Art Gatti '65 is the latest donor to the archive.) "When I retired, I came across big boxes of old photographs and files, many now yellowing and cracking," he says. "History is useful to pass along."

## Queens Named One of America's 100 "Best Value" Colleges

Queens College ranks among the nation's 100 "Best Value" colleges and 50 "Best Value" public colleges and universities according to The Princeton Review, one of America's most widely known education services companies. The Princeton Review teamed with *USA Today* to present its "Best Value" colleges lists for 2009. Schools were chosen based on criteria examined in three areas: academics, costs of attendance, and financial aid.



## The Summit, College's First Residence Hall, Nears Completion

When the college's first-ever residence hall, opens in late August, senior Lindsay Unger of Woodbury, NY, will be experiencing the best of two worlds. She will continue to attend the school where her days had stretched into nights, while at last eliminating all commuting from her busy schedule. One of the first students admitted to The Summit, Unger formerly attended Boston University but transferred to QC after one semester. "I love Queens College," she says, but adds that she has missed the residential experience the Boston school offered. That will soon change.

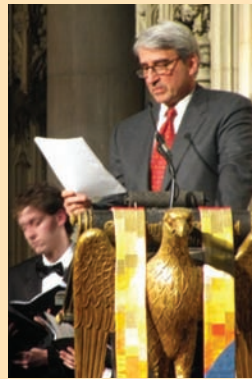
"There have been times I've left a club meeting after 11 pm, arrived home near midnight and had to return to campus for a 9:30 am class," she says. "I practically live here already—I may as well have a bed!" A history and Jewish Studies major who also has a minor in sociology, Unger looks forward to being able to study late at the library and then walk the short distance to her room. "After senior year, I'm applying to grad school at Queens College," she says, "so I plan to continue to live on campus."

One of Unger's neighbors will be the college's Vice President of Student Affairs, Joe Bertolino. "I am so committed to this project and believe in it so strongly, that I have decided to move into the faculty/staff wing of The Summit this coming August for a whole year," he says. "The Summit is a wonderful living/learning opportunity for our students. Research shows that students



who live on campus have better grades and higher graduation rates. In fact, residential students generally graduate college sooner than students who do not live on campus, thus saving time and money."

Bertolino will have distinguished company. James Stellar, who will become the college's provost this summer (see p. 4), will be joining him. Stellar plans to live in The Summit for one year while his wife and daughter remain in Boston, where his daughter is finishing high school.



To honor America's 16th president, QC performers and friends presented *The Lonesome Train*. The cantata was narrated by Ruby Dee, seen in the middle photo with Maurice Peress, who led the concert; Sam Waterston supplied the voice of Abraham Lincoln.

## QC Musicians Perform at Lincoln Bicentennial Concert

On February 12, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the Queens College Orchestra, Choir, and Chorus took part in a concert held at Riverside Church in Morningside Heights. There, along with acclaimed actors Ruby Dee and Sam Waterston, the New York City Labor Chorus, and the Riverside Inspirational Choir, they performed Earl Robinson's cantata *The Lonesome Train*, which had not been heard in its entirety for over 50 years.

*The Lonesome Train* is the story of the funeral train carrying Lincoln's body to its final resting place. It featured Dee as the narrator, Waterston as the voice of Lincoln, a barn-dance caller played by composer and musician David Amram, and banjo soloist Eric Weissberg (known for his "Dueling Banjos" in the film *Deliverance*). The QC Choir and Chorus were directed by James John and Flora Metrick. The entire perfor-

mance was conducted by Maurice Peress, director of the QC Orchestra.

The composition was premiered in Seattle in 1942 under the title *Abe Lincoln Comes Home Again*. With the country at war, this patriotic work caught on quickly. A radio broadcast and its subsequent recording (1944) with Pete Seeger, who was then a private in the army, was produced by Norman Corwin, who wrote the text for a new introduction and gave the work its final title. Among Robinson's other works are the popular labor folk ballad "Joe Hill" and "The House I Live In," which was popularized by Frank Sinatra in the 1940s.

"To see Riverside filled to capacity for this historic concert, and hear such glorious music fill its soaring Gothic space was a proud experience for me and all the participants," says Copland School Director Edward Smaldone.

# Taking a Closer Look at the Air We Breathe

*Queens College's Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, led by Dr. Steven Markowitz, recently received a major four-year grant to work with the New York City Department of Health to monitor air quality at street level in the five boroughs. The following is an edited excerpt from an interview Markowitz did for a CUNY video project featuring scientists.*

### Does New York City have an air pollution problem?

New York City does have an air pollution problem, as do most major cities in the United States and all megacities throughout the world. Our problem revolves around particulates, also known as soot, which are most easily respired into the lungs. We are out of compliance with federal regulations concerning soot and ozone, particularly in Manhattan. Both ozone and particulate matter affect the lungs and the heart, and heart disease and lung disease are major killers in New York City.

### What is the city doing about this problem?

Mayor Bloomberg put out his sustainability plan two or three years ago, called Plan NYC, which developed a number of ideas to lower air pollution, including high-occupancy vehicle lanes, congestion pricing, hybrid cars, and other initiatives. It didn't succeed, but I think some variation of it will eventually take effect.

### What is the New York City Community Air Survey that recently was launched?

Right now air-pollution monitoring in New York is done in compliance with federal standards, which means it's done on rooftops at some 15 or 20 locations. Of course, we don't live on rooftops. We spend most of our time in buildings or at street level. So what is in the air we actually breathe? Queens College developed the basic plan of the New York City Community Air Survey, which will for the first time characterize the major air pollutants at street level at a large number of sites. We began in the fall.

The college is the major partner with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on this project. We developed the portable monitors at CUNY and are putting them on street poles about 10 feet off the ground. They will be at 150 locations for 12 months, in high-traffic areas with a lot of buses and trucks, and in the quieter neighborhoods.

We harvest the units after two weeks, send the filters to labs for measurement, and move the units to another location. During a 12-month period, we will go back to any site four times so we will have our units there for two weeks in the spring, summer, winter, and fall. We quality control the data, which then go to the Health Department, where much of the statistical analysis is done. We will use the data to develop a map so we can say what the level of pollution is at any location in New York.

### How will this benefit the people of New York City?

There's been a lot of concern among city residents about air pollution in their neighborhoods. For instance, heavily trafficked neighborhoods—Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the South Bronx, East Harlem—are high-asthma neighborhoods. People have made that association between air pollution and asthma, but we haven't had real data to be able to say, yes, this pollutant is worse in this particular neighborhood. We will soon have that information for the first time. We also will make that information readily available by putting it on the web and giving it to community boards, environmental justice groups, and neighborhood groups. This should stimulate discussion and help us develop policy options on how to lower air pollution.

### How will the survey information benefit researchers?

We know where asthma occurs in New York City and we know to a lesser extent where people with emphysema are. When we develop a more precise understanding of how air pollutants differ from one neighborhood to the next and match that up with certain health outcomes, we will have a better understanding of the degree to which, if we can lower these pollutants, we can improve people's health.

### You believe this is an unprecedented project in the United States.

Work like this has been done in Montreal, in Toronto, and to some extent in southern California. However, this is the largest such project. We have more monitors in the field than any other city. If this works in New York, we'll see if this technique can be useful in other parts of the world.

Nancy Bareis





## Queens of the Court Raise Knightly Standard

By Bob Suter

The Women's Basketball Team's recent championship season is perhaps the best indication of the momentum building across the Queens College athletics program.

"It's the best women's team we've had since we joined Division II some 20 years ago," says Director of Athletics Programs Rick Wettan of the Lady Knights' run to the East Coast Conference Championship, which saw them win 23 of their last 26 games.

Athletics Information Director Neal Kaufer agrees that this is the best women's team since the storied teams of the early

1970s, teams that included Olympic silver medalist Gail Marquis '80. With only one starter graduating—Conference Player of the Year Jennifer DiChiara—and one of the best prospects in Nassau County poised to replace her, the outlook for next season, they feel, is extremely promising.

### MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Men's Basketball team also turned in an impressive performance, winning six of their last seven games en route to the playoffs, where they were eliminated. They, too, will lose only one starter to graduation.

### WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Wettan is hoping to see a new championship tradition unfold at QC with the

addition of Women's Lacrosse, which will debut as a club sport in fall 2009 before moving up to compete at the varsity level in spring 2010.

Lou DeCicco, lacrosse coach at Cardozo High School, where his teams made the playoffs each of his six seasons, will coach Lady Knights Lacrosse. A 1998 graduate of Adelphi University, where as a player he was part of 1997 and 1998 NCAA runner-up teams, DeCicco was also responsible for building the Men's Lacrosse Program at Briarcliffe College. His team won a NCLL Metro Division Championship in only its second season. He was also responsible for raising Briarcliffe to the NCAA Division II level.

"He's very actively recruiting players—particularly from Long Island," says Wettan. "We've got five or six recruits already lined up. We're really looking forward to this. It's a good addition to our program and we think we'll be very competitive over the long term."

### SWIMMING

Swimming has been another source of satisfaction for Knights fans this year, says Wettan. "The Men's Swimming Team set a bunch of school records," he says, while also noting the outstanding performance of diver Derina Wilson on the Women's Swimming & Diving Team. Wilson earned All-Conference honors at the 2009 Metropolitan Swimming Championship held February 21-23 at Rutgers University, placing fifth in her event, while QC finished ninth overall in a field of 20 teams.

### TENNIS

"Both the Men's and Women's Tennis teams finished strong in their fall seasons with both ranked second in the East Coast Conference," continues Wettan. "And they're in very good positions to move on to the NCAA Regional Championships."

Looking ahead, Wettan says, "Just this winter, the Men's Tennis Team had three

very strong recruits: one from Canada, one from England, and another from France."

Both tennis teams are enjoying the experience of playing on new tennis courts, built to replace those that were displaced to accommodate QC's first residence hall. The new courts are among a number of ongoing and anticipated improvements to QC's athletics facilities.

"We've tweaked most of our fields, adding professional drainage so they're much more playable," says Wettan, while mentioning that the college has also applied for a state grant to provide funding for artificial surfacing of one or more of the playing fields, with the baseball field being the top priority.

### SAVE THE DATE

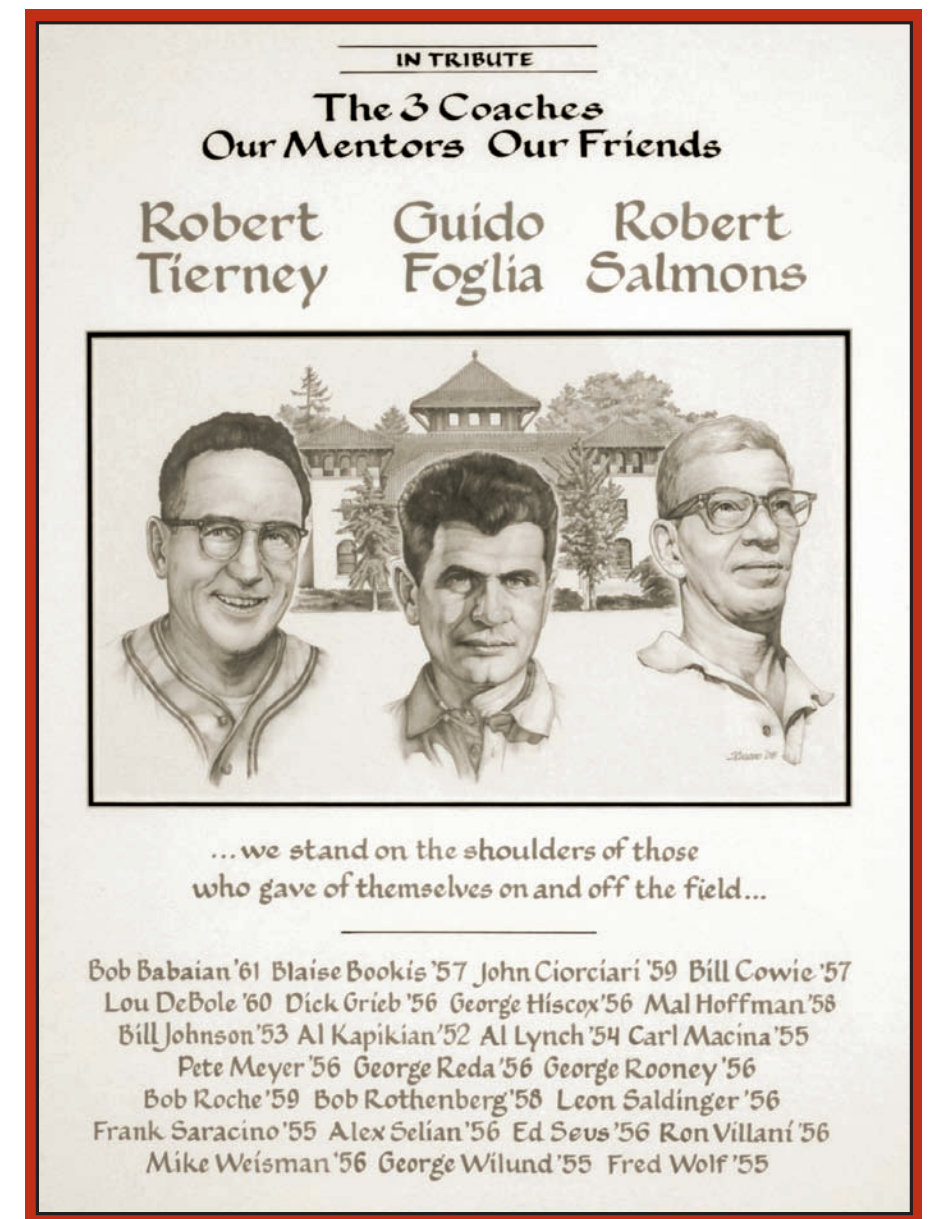
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## Annual Golf & Tennis Classic

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To register, visit  
[http://athletics.qc.cuny.edu/  
classic/golf\\_tennis/index](http://athletics.qc.cuny.edu/classic/golf_tennis/index)



## Tribute to Three Coaches Highlights 2008 Homecoming

Last year's September Homecoming featured a special tribute to three coaches who figure prominently in Queens College's athletics history: Robert Tierney, Robert Salmons, and Guido Foglia, who were active at the college from the late 1940s through the 1970s. Tierney coached baseball, Salmons coached basketball and golf, and Foglia coached tennis and soccer. The tribute, now on display at the FitzGerald Gymnasium, is in the form of a pen-and-ink drawing. "In Tribute: The 3 Coaches was a project of 25 of us who played for all three coaches back in the 1950s and 1960s," notes Michael Weisman '56. "We commissioned Steve Cusano, an illustrator with whom I have worked in the past, to create an original piece with their likenesses against the backdrop of the original H Building on campus. It is a gift to the college for its contributions to our lives and to honor the three men for their contributions to us back then, and throughout our lives to this day."

Neal Kaufer



Jennifer DiChiara and Amanda Bartlett



**Lucy Komisar '64 turned her passion for social justice into a career as an activist and investigative journalist**

# From Picket Lines To Headlines

**By David McKay Wilson**

Lucy Komisar '64 enrolled at Queens College planning to study French and Spanish so she could become a foreign-language teacher.

It was the perfect job for a young lady coming of age in the late 1950s.

The nascent civil rights movement, however, changed her plans. While a college student, she stood on picket lines at Woolworth's on 125th Street in Harlem, joined local civil rights groups, and became active in the National Student Association.

In 1962 she learned that the *Mississippi Free Press* needed help, so she took a leave of absence from school and traveled to Jackson to serve as the paper's editor at the ripe age of 20. Forty-seven years later Komisar, a freelance investigative journalist who reports on corruption in the financial industry, is still prodding the powerful. (Her work can be read at [www.komisarscoop.com](http://www.komisarscoop.com).)

"I saw the significance of journalism in bringing about social change," says Komisar, who lives in Greenwich Village in Manhattan. "People in Mississippi needed to know they had the right to vote. They needed to know they had the right to join a union."

That year in Mississippi gave Komisar an education in journalism that she couldn't get in the classroom. She edited

and wrote for the weekly, which at the time was the state's only black-owned newspaper. There, she chronicled the strife on the frontlines of America's racial battle. She learned how journalism could be a vehicle for social change if writers documented what was true about what was wrong in American society.

Racial violence erupted often in Mississippi in 1962 and 1963. She covered the ordeal of James Meredith, who was admitted to the University of Mississippi and entered campus under the protection of the U.S. National Guard. She covered the assassination of civil rights leader Medgar Evers, who was gunned down in his driveway by a member of the Ku Klux Klan. The *Free Press* also helped black residents register to vote. Mississippi authorities had erected substantial barriers for voter registration, requiring potential voters to fill out a lengthy application. The paper printed the application, and some potential voters filled it out and sent it to the paper so Komisar could correct any errors before it was submitted to the authorities.

By the end of summer in 1963, it was time for Komisar to return to New York. She arranged the trip to coincide with the march on Washington, DC, in late August, when the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. Back at college, she completed her degree in history, with a minor in education.

"Lucy was intense, directed, and very assertive," says June Tauber Golden, '64, one of Komisar's college classmates, who has remained friends with Komisar both on the tennis court and in political circles. "She had a very strong sense of right and wrong."

Back at school, Komisar worked Saturdays at the *New York Post* as a copy girl, putting her on the path for a reporting job.

She used her contacts to help a staff writer research a series about the civil rights movement. But the writer never produced the story, and Komisar was then relegated back to copy-girl status.

She quit and tried her hand at public relations, working at an anti-poverty agency under a young black activist named Carl McCall, who later became New York State comptroller. But Komisar yearned

**"Lucy was intense, directed, and assertive . . . She had a very strong sense of right and wrong."**

**June Tauber Golden, '64**



Photo courtesy of Lucy Komisar

Ready to speak out: In 1973, Komisar addressed a National Organization for Women conference in Washington, D.C.

to get back into the trenches to report on the emergence of the women's movement and U.S. foreign policy. Over the ensuing years, Komisar has worked mostly as a freelance journalist, finding stories and pitching them to editors.

She was a staff writer at the *Record* in Bergen County, NJ, from 1978 to 1980, where one of the paper's top editors taught her the nuts-and-bolts of investigative journalism. It's hard work because the targets of an investigative report will vet every fact and strike back if there's an error. The reporting must be fair, impeccable, grounded in documents, and able to withstand keen scrutiny.

"The editor told me that if you are saying someone is doing something wrong, you need to give them the best opportunity to confront your evidence," she says. "You have to give them the opportunity to say you are wrong, and you need to put that in the story."

That standard has served her well in a career that has taken her around the world. She reported from El Salvador and Nicaragua during the wars there in the late 1970s and 1980s. In the 1980s and 1990s she focused on the struggles to bring democracy to the Philippines, Zaire, and the Middle East. She also wrote about European politics and the dissident movements in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. During this time she wrote three books: *The New Feminism*; *Down and Out in the USA: A History of Public Welfare*; and *Corazon Aquino: The Story of a Revolution*.

Over the past decade, Komisar has focused on exposing the offshore banking system, which uses secret bank accounts and shell companies to hide and move the money of corporate crooks, international criminals, arms and drug traffickers, terrorists, and dictators, and also allows companies to shield profits from taxation by setting up shell corporations. She has built a solid reputation in this area, so financial-industry whistleblowers frequently contact her to spill the goods. Her stories are often disseminated by the Inter Press Service, an international news service.

IPS Regional Editor Kitty Stapp says, "There are very few people in the world who cover the labyrinthine world of offshore and corporate corruption. That's what makes Lucy so remarkable: She stays on this beat because she has such a strong sense of injustice and her capacity to be outraged by corporate malfeasance hasn't been blunted by cynicism."

## MAKING PROGRESS: '60s Alumni Respond

*A number of sixties graduates responded to last issue's story about alumni in the civil rights movement ("Making Progress"). They especially enjoyed the anecdote about Dena Weisman Fisher '65, who spent three days in the Women's House of Detention for protesting employment practices at the 1964 New York World's Fair, causing her to miss an exam and fail a math class—until department head Banesh Hoffmann instructed her professor to give her an A. Below are two of the comments we received.*

### inspired to Action

I was a fairly shy accounting student at QC, and it was Dena Weisman who strongly encouraged me to participate in the demonstrations at the World's Fair. Despite some harassment from my colleagues in the Accounting Department, I marched to Flushing Meadow and was extremely moved by the demonstration as I was by the events of the college's Freedom Week.

Although I was not able to go south since I was in the Army Reserves and had to attend summer camp at Camp Drum, that week of civil rights activism at QC helped lead to my lifetime involvement in the civil rights, peace, and labor movements. I found out about the deaths of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney while listening to a radio in a foxhole at Camp Drum, and a short time later helped found Vets & Reservists to End the War in Vietnam.

I have to give Queens College and the highlighted activist students some credit for leading me into a lifetime of progressive activism.

**Lewis Friedman '65**  
Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY

### On the March in the Fifties

Your article brought back fond memories of my four years at Queens College, 1957 to 1961. I have mixed feelings about missing out on the activism of the sixties, during which I went from college graduate to being a father, husband, high school teacher, graduate student, and journalist. And in sombre moments I wonder that if I had been in Andrew Goodman's class I would have been in a shallow Mississippi grave with him. As it was, I was in Mississippi a few years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act to help Charles Evers, the newly elected mayor of Fayette. Things were much safer; the

police were on our side by then.

Rest assured, activism did not begin with the sixties. Members of my class—the "Silent Generation" that grew up in the Eisenhower era and the McCarthy years—also included quite a few of the older siblings of those "red diaper babies" to whom you refer.

We attended marches on Washington, DC, for civil rights and integration as part of the campus chapters of CORE and NAACP. Together with Harry Belafonte, Bayard Rustin, and A. Philip Randolph, we were happy to have 100,000 participants in 1958, 1959, and 1960.

You mention the protests at Woolworth's stores in 1960. Because I was public relations chair of the campus NAACP chapter, it was my job to organize and conduct those Saturday-morning picket lines at Main Street and Roosevelt Avenue, and later at the 42nd Street Woolworth's in Manhattan. It is a strange accident of history that in 1962 I became friends with a man in Miami Beach, where I was teaching, who had been expelled from Southern University in Louisiana for doing the same thing. He was a CORE field director and later went to Harvard Law thanks to CORE's Scholarship, Education and Defense Fund. Fast-forward to 1970 and I was public relations director for what had become known as SEDFRE (Scholarship, Education, and Defense Fund for Racial Equality). Our paths continued to criss-cross, and we still keep in touch—he as an attorney and me as a semi-retired telecommunications entrepreneur.

As a contrast to the treatment of Dena Weisman Fisher, let me tell you my experience five years earlier. Some of us held a peace rally on the steps of Paul Klapper Library to protest a campuswide air-raid drill. The police were called and I was taken to the dean's office and given a one-week suspension. None of my professors in the political science or history departments (my majors) offered me any slack, liberals or not. "You did the crime, do the time," was what they did offer. In contrast, my physics teacher, a former Marine, insisted that "no one tells me who can and who cannot come into my class." So for a week I was banned from all classes except his.

Nevertheless, I am proud and appreciative of the excellent education that I received at Queens College.

**John David Herman '61**  
Phoenix, AZ



Nancy Bareis



Komisar






# Entrepreneurial Scientist

By Margo Nash

## LATE BLOOMERS take heart.

Dennis Liotta—Emory University professor of organic chemistry, 1974 CUNY PhD, co-discoverer of two breakthrough anti-HIV/AIDS drugs; author of approximately 200 publications, holder of over 50 patents in antiviral and anti-cancer drugs; international scientific entrepreneur and key figure in the development of biotechnology in the Southeast—yes, that Dennis Liotta, Queens '70, got a C- in one of his first organic chemistry classes at Queens.



“For the first two years I hardly opened a book,” says Liotta. “By the time I got serious, I had dug a fairly sizable hole. But in a backhand sort of way it turned out to be an advantage. I felt I had to prove myself.” He has.

Between 1995 and 2003,

Liotta and his colleagues beat out the big drug companies and produced two HIV/AIDS drugs used today by virtually every HIV/AIDS-infected person in the United States. His habit of taking on challenges was first noted by his Queens professors. “Dennis was very much exploratory. He always wanted to go and look at something new. And if he would come up against a problem, a problem that a lot of others would back away from, he would say okay, so that’s another problem,” says Robert Engel (Chemistry and Biochemistry), who taught Liotta as an undergraduate and mentored him as a PhD candidate.

Liotta joined the Emory faculty in 1976—and in the 1980s he took on a big challenge, indeed. He was already an internationally known organic chemist and drug company consultant when he decided to launch his own hunt at Emory for an AIDS drug.

In a sheltered environment away from corporate pressures, he and Emory colleagues Raymond Schinazi and Woo-Baeg Choi developed 3TC, a synthetic, low-toxicity, antiviral compound that interfered with the replication of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. In an accelerated review process, the FDA approved 3TC

**Liotta and his colleagues beat out the big drug companies and produced two HIV/AIDS drugs used today by virtually every HIV/AIDS-infected person in the United States.**

in 1995, and it has been a pillar of AIDS treatment ever since, part of the formulary for Combivir and Tricivir, two drugs that combine 3TC with other agents. 3TC is also available in lower-dose Lamivudine, an FDA-approved treatment for Hepatitis B.

The same Emory team went on to create Emtricitabine (brand name Emtriva), a high-potency, low-toxicity compound that blocks a protein HIV needs to replicate. Emtriva was approved by the FDA in 2003 and, like 3TC, is manufactured in combination with other drugs.

It was big news two years later when Gilead Sciences paid Emory University \$540 million for Emory’s royalty rights to Emtricitabine, reported to be the largest such deal a U.S. university had made until that time. It put Emory on the scientific research map, made the Emory researchers rich, and put the entrepreneurial and creative energies of Liotta and his co-inventors into high gear.

**ACCORDING TO AN ARTICLE** in *TechJournal South*, “the three Emtricitabine co-inventors founded or provided crucial support for several

of the most promising life sciences companies in the Southeast.” Liotta founded or helped new companies in the region via his own venture capital fund, Centrosome Ventures, among them, Metastatix, Inc., Curry Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and NeurOp, Inc. Liotta was already investing in biotechnology start-ups. In 1996 he had invested in Triangle Pharmaceuticals in North Carolina, purchased by Gilead Science for \$482 million in 2001.

“I like to think of myself as an entrepreneurial scientist,” Liotta says in a phone interview. “Definitely not a businessperson. It’s one of those aspects that I do out of necessity. I can only develop compounds up to a point. Then it really becomes more challenging. We do discovery, the early portion, and the university is well suited to that.

“We will do the initial synthesis for a compound. Obviously we can’t test it until we make it on a small scale. Others, typically,

do an important part of the work developing a separate and efficient manufacturing process. That is why we spin out companies to move the development forward.”

So a drug designer has a choice, he says. “You can do two things. Simply pass the baton and hope the folks running the company do a great job, or you could continue to have a hand in the process. I want to do everything I can to assist in the development of a promising drug candidate.”

**THE QUEST** for low-toxicity compounds continues to be a hallmark of Liotta’s laboratory at Emory and at others with which he is associated. Particularly in the setting of oncology where standard treatments are too toxic to be taken daily, a low-toxicity compound is a kind of Holy Grail. Liotta and his colleagues are focusing on creating low-toxicity antagonists of the cytokine receptor CXCR4, a signaling protein that may play a role in cancer metastasis.

They have also been investigating EF24, a structural analog of curcumin—a compound found in turmeric, an Indian spice used in curries. Curcumin has shown anti-tumor activity in the laboratory as well as in people who eat a lot of it. In India it is widely used for its medicinal qualities for a variety of ailments.

Liotta says that the analog is 20 to 30 times stronger than the natural substance and could be used with other treatments. “We see a lot of interest and are anxious to move it into clinical trials,” he says. (As it happens, Liotta loves turmeric and sprinkles a lot on his food.)

In 2005 the Georgia section of the American Chemical Society gave Liotta its Herty Medal for his “seminal contributions in medicinal chemistry that are highly imaginative and of high quality,” and for being an “outstanding scientist, scholar, inventor and educator.”

In regard to teaching, Liotta says, “My favorite course to teach is introductory organic chemistry. It’s the most fun. You can have a lot of impact on students, get them excited.

That’s what people at Queens College did for me. I got a lot of mentoring from a lot of people there. I think but for that, who knows what?”

**LIOTTA, WHO GREW UP IN BROOKLYN AND QUEENS**, says he knew by age 9 he would probably become a chemist. His older

brother Charles has also become a chemist. What drew Liotta to chemistry? “In other areas, you take what nature gives you. In chemistry you have infinite possibility to create new things. That was exciting,” Liotta says.

“One of the things I liked when I took organic chemistry for the first time: It was a course where you really had to think and synthesize concepts. It wasn’t sufficient to simply understand all the facts and put them together in creative ways. I found that very intriguing; I still do.”

## SEVEN YEARS AGO

Liotta embarked on a project to start a drug discovery company in Johannesburg, South Africa. The company, iThemba, would do work outsourced from other pharmaceutical companies to fund its own research goals: developing drugs to treat the diseases of sub-Saharan Africa, such as HIV, TB, and malaria. iThemba got its first contracts in July 2008 and the lab, whose Zulu name means “hope,” opened. Using

what sounds like chemists’ lingo, Liotta explains, “I didn’t know how to extract the company’s real potential. The fun came later in understanding how many incredible options there are.”

In March 2009 Liotta went to Africa for a drug discovery training program in Capetown and Pretoria, and for the official opening of iThemba, which was accompanied by a scientific symposium attended by international scientists. He has also begun hiring staff for the new Emory Institute for Drug Discovery, which he directs. “It will give us much more of the infrastructure that we need to develop new drugs, at least in a preclinical sense, here at the university. It’s a nice new development,” he says.



At his Emory University lab and at other locations in the United States and South Africa, chemist Dennis Liotta '70 is researching drugs that could combat AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and cancer.



# YES OBAMA COULD

By Donna Shoemaker



Nancy Barreis

At 9:59 pm CST on Election Day last November, Joel Benenson '79 confidently eyed a big screen in Chicago's Grant Park. As lead pollster and a senior strategist for the presidential race of Sen. Barack Obama,

Benenson had joined other insiders in the tent behind the stage. Outside, the jubilant crowd counted down to a hoped-for victory. Immediately after the West Coast polls closed, CNN flashed the news that Obama had been elected. "It was just incredible to see it on the television screen," Benenson recalls, and to bask in "the tears of joy and celebration."

Founding partner and president of the New York-based Benenson Strategy Group, the QC alumnus is the "star pollster in the Democratic Party" (*New Yorker*, Nov. 17, 2008). Benenson's firm shaped the party's polling in battleground states, zeroing in on what he calls "UFGs" (up-for-grabs voters). He was a member of the debate prep team that prepared Obama and Sen. Joseph Biden for their televised national debates. He was involved in shaping the campaign's communications strategy and developing paid media.

After turning down work for other candidates, Benenson joined Obama's campaign in January 2007, at the invitation of its chief political consultant, David Axelrod. The pollster, like the

campaign's top strategists, had "been deeply involved in helping Democrats win in the 2006 midterm elections," the *New Yorker* pointed out. Benenson says it was his level of confidence in Obama that drew him to his cause. The African-American U.S. senator from Illinois "was the first person I'd really heard talk about rebuilding our common sense of purpose . . . that we have a stake in each other," Benenson says. "We came out of Super Tuesday feeling very clearly that we were going to win the nomination and then the general election. We had a path," he explains. "It was certainly a long path, and very gratifying." The path the campaign never veered from, as he summarized for the *New Yorker*, was that "we defined change in a way that Barack Obama had to be the answer."

Benenson likewise is passionate about the need to address the tax code's economic imbalance. "Our tax system has been stood on its head, with the benefit going not to the working people. People at the top have reaped enormous benefits," he believes.

Indeed, last fall, as the economic outlook grew more grim, recalls Benenson, "We kept telling ourselves that the *good news* is that we're going to win the election, but the *bad news* is that we're going to win the election." However, his confidence in Obama remains high. "We've got big challenges," Benenson states, "and we're only going to solve them if we take them on as a nation."

In the Queens neighborhood of Laurelton, Benenson grew up in a family that in many ways was "typically working class," as he puts it. However, he was only 18 months old when he lost his father. He remembers his mother struggling "like single moms still do today." Her dream was to have all three children graduate from college, and they did. His sister, Janice Benenson '65, at QC "was pretty successful on the debating team," he says. In their home, "politics were served up with dinner. There was a lot of banter, a lot of fun."

He doesn't mind telling you—and his two teenage children—that in college, "I didn't do my best." After leaving QC in 1974 lacking 12 credits as a theatre major, Benenson continued to pursue his interest in avant-garde theatre with QC friends, then became a beer distributor in Brooklyn. When he returned in 1979 to complete his degree, an English course with Bette Weidman, today an associate professor, proved to be "one of the best classes I ever took," he says. "I really learned to love fiction."

In the early 1980s, "I decided out of the blue that I wanted to be a journalist and didn't want to be a beer distributor," Benenson says. He took journalism classes at NYU and the New School, then eventually signing on as a political reporter for the *Daily News*, ultimately becoming bureau chief in Albany. When Gov. Mario Cuomo unsuccessfully ran for re-election in 1994, Benenson was his communications director. Later he became a VP at the New York ad agency FCB. One day there, while watching a presentation, he knew he wanted "to be the guy in the front of the room with all these numbers," so he became a pollster in 1995. The following year, working for Mark Penn's polling firm, Benenson served as the internal manager for polling for the Clinton-Gore presidential ticket. In 2000 he established his own firm, the Benenson Strategy Group.

Benenson's analytical expertise has aided governors, mayors, and U.S. senators, and he has guided corporate clients and CEOs through some challenging communications issues. For one client, Procter & Gamble, his research efforts shaped the strategy for the roll-out of Olestra, the fat substitute. These days Benenson is handling polling for several New York City contests and for a California gubernatorial candidate. In early February he addressed the annual National Health Policy Conference in Washington, DC. He emphasized to that audience how polls of voters clearly show that affordable health care ranks behind economic recovery and energy independence as a national priority.

As a journalist, "I always liked polls and polling and political strategy," Benenson reflects. "I really liked covering Mario Cuomo, in the sense that you knew you were covering a giant in

politics," he observes. "When you asked him questions, you had to be at your best. Reporters are trained in asking questions in a creative way to get people to talk about what they might not want to talk about," he adds. "What really interests me about my work is being able to dig beneath the surface [to reveal] the underlying attitudes that shape people's decisions."

To probe the public's attitudes in innovative ways, in 2005 Benenson co-founded iModerate Research Technologies, which makes use of live, online, one-on-one qualitative sessions. "Ultimately, polling will evolve right down to the hand-held level," he predicts. Not only has more polling migrated to the Internet, but also, the emerging field of collective intelligence opens up "a whole realm of research about listening to people, to consumers, to voters," he points out. Communications technology "is going to transform what we do, to give us ways to get different layers of thought and feelings."

On his several visits to campus each year, the pollster finds that QC students, too, "ask pretty good questions."

His former political science professor, Michael Krasner, invited Benenson to talk to classes. Two weeks after the election, students grilled the pollster about the campaign. "They had a lot of questions about Sarah Palin; about why we thought an African-American would win an election; about whether there was a Bradley effect, where white voters wouldn't tell you the truth," he recalls.

News accounts noted that Benenson never doubted Obama could win back supporters of Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton. Last fall, after "the excitement about Palin receded," notes Benenson, "the polling showed that we had gone back to our 4- or 5-point lead." He believes that the first presidential debate on Sept. 26 was proof that the Democratic campaign strategy would lead to victory over Sen. John McCain. "Sen. Obama just won the debate hands-down. He was more presidential," Benenson sums up.

The former reporter has transitioned well into his status as the guy up front with all the numbers. "I have been blessed that for the last quarter of a century, I have had two great careers that I absolutely love, that bring together my communication skills, my business skills, my strategic mind," Benenson says. "I'm 56, and I'm not thinking about ever stopping working."

Other blessings he counts are his kids and what he terms his "extraordinarily good marriage" to Lisa Benenson, editor in chief of *Hallmark* magazine. During the long campaign, he appreciated how his family was "extremely supportive." He speaks with pride of how his daughter, Anya, a sophomore at Bryn Mawr College, actually got up at 4 am each day at the Democratic National Convention last August to have "the time of her life staffing Robert Gibbs," now Obama's press secretary.

One test for these Montclair, NJ, residents came last September, when Biden's staff asked for Benenson's help in preparing for the debate with Palin. Benenson knew he'd have to clear that request at home, for it meant missing the last game his family could see together at the old Yankee Stadium. Despite being huge Yankees fans, "Each one of them said, 'You have to go prep with Sen. Biden,'" he says.

On Election Night, it all paid off.







# DANGER & DISCOVERIES IN THE CONGO

Photos :Terrence Demos

By David McKay Wilson

In a research effort that blended the dangers of a 19th-century expedition in unexplored terrain with the sophistication of 21st-century science, evolutionary biologist Terrence Demos last summer discovered four species of mammals in the remote wilderness of the Congo's Itombwe Mountains.

Demos, a CUNY doctoral student, along with Julian Kerbis (Field Museum Natural History, Roosevelt University) and several Congolese researchers, headed up a team that was accosted by armed militiamen who apprehended members of the team and would only release them after money was paid. There were tense moments in the forest, but the researchers returned home safely with their prize specimens, whose DNA will be analyzed to discern their evolutionary history.

Demos wants to see if this high-altitude forest was a refuge for mammals during past climate change. He notes that over the past 2 million years, there have been 10 glacial epochs in which much of the Earth was covered in ice, and the African forests shrunk. The results will also be shared with the Wildlife Conservation Society and World Wildlife Fund, which are campaigning to preserve "hot spots" of biodiversity around the world, where many unique species are under critical habitat threat.



"Not all of these forests will be saved," says Demos, of Manhattan, who began his doctoral program at Queens College in 2007. "But studies like these allow governments and nongovernmental organizations to prioritize these hot spots. A lot of these old forests are gone, and a lot more will vanish."

QC Professor Michael Hickerson (Biology), who is Demos's PhD advisor, says Demos's discoveries over just four weeks provide proof that the Itombwe Mountain region is an ecological gem worth preserving. "There may be a whole lost world there," says Hickerson. "He may have stumbled upon a hot spot within a hot spot."

The Itombwe region, which covers more than 2,500 square miles, is quite remote, with no good roads, and peaks as high as 11,000 feet. Demos's research team started at the shores of Lake Tanganyika and trekked four days into the interior to find forest spared from farming, cattle grazing, logging, and the extraction of coltan, a mineral used in cell phones around the world. Twenty porters carried much of the gear for the team, which included four Congolese scientists.

"I realized I wasn't in such great shape," acknowledges Demos. "Some of the trails were quite steep—like a wall, straight up. Torrential rains every evening didn't help matters on narrow and muddy trails. We had some very long, long days."

When the expedition began, the team had met with village chiefs in the region to explain their journey. They thought they had an agreement for safe passage. A local militia, however,

The Itombwe Mountains loom over the scientists' collecting camp. Insets, from left: a fruitbat hangs out; the field team assembles a shelter from local materials; an African sunbird shows his profile; and an Itombwe villager carries her child.



wasn't part of the deal. The militia came to their camp, brandishing weapons, and took members of the team away to their leader, known only as "The General."

"It was just after dusk when three Mai Mai militia entered our camp and I immediately knew we were in for trouble," Demos recalls. "They interrogated us for over two hours and ordered some team members onto the ground with automatic weapons. They finally left after receiving a cash payout. We all agreed we had to get to safer ground and our abducted team members were released the following day."

The trip to the Congo was Demos's third expedition in four years as he searches African jungles and forests with traps and nets to study small mammals. He was in Kenya in 2006 and Malawi in 2007. This summer, Demos is heading for Rwanda, which has a much more stable government.

While he prepares for his next African journey, he'll also be studying the potentially new species, which include three shrews and a climbing mouse with striped fur. Demos says one of the shrews, which is 1.5 inches long and weighs just 2.5 grams, is among the world's smallest mammals.

None of the new species has been named. Upon describing

them in a peer-reviewed paper, Demos gets to formally name those species that are confirmed to be new to science, part of the process that begins with analyzing their anatomy and genetic make-up and comparing them to specimens catalogued at natural history museums. Scientists have great latitude with naming new species. Some name the animal for the region where it resides while others create names that describe the animal. While it's considered bad form for a scientist to name a species for one's self, others have honored cultural heroes. In 2008, an East Carolina University scientist named a new species of spider, *Myrmekiaphila neilyoungi*, in honor of the rock star, Neil Young.

Other scientists have auctioned off the naming rights. In 2007 Conservation International and the Monaco-Asia Society raised \$2 million by auctioning off the naming rights to 10 new species. The proceeds funded conservation efforts in Indonesia.

Demos says he's considering auctioning off the names to support further research efforts in Africa.

"If I do an auction, it would be done with the understanding that all the money will be used to carry out surveys in threatened Congo habitats," says Demos. "There's never enough money for biodiversity work."



Grassland covers a high plateau of the Itombwe Mountains. Inset: Terrence Demos (seated at far left) and his colleagues enjoy a photo op with Congolese soldiers, who allowed the team to proceed past a military checkpoint. Researchers had been abducted within an area that was not under national military control.



An Armenian raised in a working-class Catholic town, poet and performance artist **Nancy Agabian** (English) experienced the cultural confusion that accompanies minority status. But her memoir ***Me as Her Again: True Stories of an Armenian Daughter*** (Aunt Lute) is not the usual saga of how a second-generation American forges a hyphenated ethnic identity. The big topic here is the long-term impact of the Armenian genocide on her family and, by extension, her entire community. Agabian's paternal grandmother, Zanic, barely survived a death march from Turkey to Syria, where she was sold into servitude. Older brothers who had immigrated to the United States years earlier rescued her from an orphanage, only to push her into an arranged marriage with their prospective business partner. Unspoken problems reverberated through the generations, as Zanic's American-born daughter-in-law—Agabian's mother—was pressured into marriage; at age 23, she was considered an older bride. Agabian wrestles with this painful, complicated legacy, linking the struggles faced by the women in her family to her own questions about gender (the title is a homophone for *miaseragan*, the Armenian equivalent of gay).

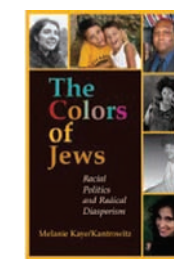


Marriage is one of the United States' most cherished and most vulnerable institutions. Although the majority of our nation's adults make at least one trip down the aisle, divorce rates here rank among the highest in the world. This trend, which emerged after World War I, inspired the development of an entire industry devoted to keeping people together, or in some cases, preventing them from committing matrimony with each other. **Kristin Celello** (History) explores that industry, and the assumptions behind it, in ***Making Marriage Work: A History of Marriage and Divorce in the Twentieth-Century United States*** (North Carolina UP). The book traces the professionalization of marital counseling through the decades and also shows how movies, among other popular media, shaped the public's impression of single women, from the chastened

title character of the hit 1930 film *The Divorcée* to the predatory husband-stealer played by Glenn Close in the 1987 potboiler *Fatal Attraction*. In the process, Celello illustrates the fact that for much of the last century, women were identified as the primary beneficiaries of marriages—and given the burden of keeping those relationships intact.



Best known for his Oscar-winning dramas *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Philadelphia* and comedies such as *Marié to the Mob*, director Jonathan Demme has also achieved acclaim for his documentaries *My Cousin Bobby* and *Jimmy Carter Man from Plains*, as well as concert films *Stop Making Sense* (the Talking Heads) and *Neil Young: Heart of Gold*. Yet, despite decades of cinematic achievements, Demme's name is often overlooked when conversation in the popular press turns to the great directors (Scorsese, Eastwood, Spielberg, Coppola) of our time. In ***Jonathan Demme: Interviews*** (Mississippi UP), editor **Robert Kapsis** (Sociology) has assembled a collection of conversations spanning three decades that uses the director's own words to describe his mixture of artistry and social consciousness and perhaps best explains why he remains something of a film world enigma.



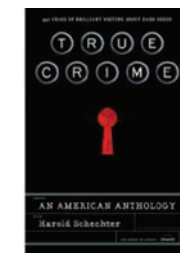
Since their expulsion from Jerusalem, and possibly before, Jews have been a multiethnic people. The evidence is intriguing. An image in the Sarajevo Haggadah, an illuminated medieval manuscript, depicts a black woman among the participants at a Passover Seder. The oldest Jewish congregations in the U.S., including Shearith Israel in Manhattan, proudly identify their founders as 17th-century immigrants from Portugal and Spain. And Queens itself is home to a thriving community of Bukharian Jews, who came from Uzbekistan. But in much of the Western world, Jews are presumed to be Ashkenazic: light-skinned, of European heritage, speaking Yiddish or descended from someone who did. **Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz** (History & Comp. Lit.) tackles this notion

# Q Bookshelf

head-on in ***The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism*** (Indiana UP). Drawing on extensive interviews with Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, Asia, Africa, and India, with Jews of color, and with Jews who are, like herself, committed to fighting racism, Kaye/Kantrowitz explores complex and multiple identities within a group with a long record of outsider status, and argues the value of Diasporism.



**Satchmo: The Wonderful World and Art of Louis Armstrong** (Abrams) by Steven Brower is a biography in the form of an art book. It tells the story of Armstrong's life through his writings, scrapbooks, and artworks, many of which have never been published before. The artwork includes hundreds of collages from the **Louis Armstrong House Museum** that were created by Satchmo to decorate the boxes in his audiotape collection.



**True Crimes: An American Anthology** (Library of America) finds **Harold Schechter** (English) again exploring his favorite topic: the evil men (and women) do to each other. This hefty volume (772 pages) edited by Schechter offers a collection aptly described as "350 years of brilliant writing about dark deeds." As he explains in his introduction, from the days of the early colonies to the present, Americans have been fascinated by violent crime, and many of the best writers of the day (Hawthorne, Poe, Twain, Mencken, Hurston, Capote—to name a few) have given expression to that fascination. From the hanging in the Massachusetts Bay Colony of John Billington, a Pilgrim father described by Governor William Bradford as "one of the profanest men among us," to writer Dominick Dunne's account of the murderous Menendez brothers of Beverly Hills, **True Crimes** presents a sometimes grisly chronology of some of the darker chapters of the American Experience as interpreted by some of our best chroniclers.



## SPECIALISTS IN Communication

**Psychologists Ken '86 and Sharon Reeve '98 use applied behavior analysis to reach autistic children**

Ken Reeve ('86, PhD CUNY '98) and Sharon Reeve (MA '98, PhD CUNY '01) share an office, a profession, a calling, and a life together. The couple—who first met at Queens College as graduate psychology students—teach together, have co-authored over a dozen studies and a book, and have two sons. Today, they are associate professors of psychology at Caldwell College in Essex County, NJ. Ken recently completed a six-year term as chair of Caldwell's Department of Psychology.



**“You get a little guy who would prefer any repetitive movement to looking at me . . . that is my biggest challenge.”—Sharon Reeve**

Three years ago the Reeves started a master's program in applied behavior analysis (ABA) at Caldwell. ABA is one of the few peer-reviewed methods designed to overcome the huge challenge of teaching autistic children. Their program is the only one in New Jersey, a state known for its groundbreaking work in treating autism. Last spring the master's program was featured in a *New York Times* article, “A Master's in Self-Help,” which focused on the fact that many parents of autistic children have enrolled.

ABA, which was developed in the 1960s, breaks behavior down into components that are taught to children with autism—tiny part by tiny part. “It is an applied, complex science and the way in which it is used is different from child to child,” explains Sharon, director of the Caldwell program and one of

the first people to become a board-certified behavior analyst in New Jersey.

As the late afternoon sun streamed through their office windows overlooking a woodsy campus where tall pines grow, Sharon and Ken explain how ABA works.

“You get a little guy who would prefer any repetitive movement to looking at me,” says Sharon. “That is my biggest challenge—how to get him to look at me instead. We use it to teach everything, to teach them to talk, to have friends, to learn leisure skills, to learn independence, to dress themselves.”

“We work with kids on each part of what they need to learn, one part at a time, and give them a lot of feedback on how they are doing,” Ken says. “Like a child using scissors, which is a very early skill that most typical kids might learn.” One way to teach a child with autism to use scissors, he explains, is to “take a paper with dashed lines and guide the child's hand and give them a lot of positive feedback and repeat.”

Sharon also serves as a consultant to local school districts to help teachers work with autistic students. She recalled one little girl “who was having a hard time learning to ask for things. It took us a while to figure out what she wanted. Kids with autism may have no communication system at all. She was very new to my program. She had no way to tell me what she wanted. All she could do was scream. The answer was to teach her a simple gesture. It's a simple idea, but the way you teach somebody is very complex.”

“Ken and Sharon were excellent doctoral students in our learning processes and behavior analysis program and have accomplished many professional mileposts since,” Claire L. Poulson wrote in an email. Poulson, professor emerita of psychology, was the chair of QC's applied behavior analysis program and taught the Reeves as well as co-authored studies with them.

The Reeves say it was Poulson who first inspired them. “She helped me develop my love for how kids learn,” Ken says. “She taught both of us to be very good researchers, and that it is important to really have the facts about what makes a kid tick and not just base what you do on opinion.” “She taught me how to be a scientist,” Sharon adds.

Sharon Reeve was Sharon Hobbie back in 1992 when she first started doing graduate work at Queens, and Ken was finishing his PhD. Soon they were working in a lab together, co-authoring papers, and studying learning behavior in college students and in

laboratory animals. (Among the interesting things Sharon found out: Pigeons have really good discrimination skills.) In 1998 Ken got his PhD. Sharon got her MA, and they got married. And what of working with her spouse?

“Share a life, share an office,” Sharon says. “It's wonderful to be able to share this part of your life with the most important person in your life. I think we are far better parents because of the knowledge we have in psychology and applied behavior analysis. I can't imagine raising kids without knowing what we know—because we are still challenged as parents. But we are very much on the same page about the ways in which we want to raise our children; we feel completely the same.” —Margo Nash



## A FRIEND TO At-Risk Pupils

**Myriam Gehy '97 nurtures students in the city's most dangerous schools**

Truants, runaways, substance abusers—Myriam Gehy '97 saw them all as a counselor in the Queens Family Court's Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) Diversion Program. She counseled for seven years after completing her master's degree in social work at the University of Stony Brook in 2000. Then the Queens College sociology graduate headed for other challenging venues: working with Partnership with Children in some New York City schools on the Department of Education's “persistently dangerous” list.

As a Partnership with Children site director, Gehy coordinates social work services in five public schools, ranging from elementary to high school. Partnership's teams offer at-risk children the emotional, social, and cognitive skills support to “succeed in school, in society and in their lives,” according to the nonprofit's website. Partnership also assists their families and runs programs year-round.

Gehy, who immigrated from Haiti 25 years ago with her family—sister, brother, and parents—settled in New York City. Because she spoke only French and Creole, she was taunted by her sixth-grade classmates, who called her “French fries.” At one of her elementary schools, Gehy notes, “there are 12 languages spoken.” Today, she is savvy about the strategies that help transplanted children and their parents begin to feel at home in America.

“I'm able to empathize with the children. I know they want to do the work, but they may not understand what the teachers are saying. They really feel lost at times, they feel so frustrated. But you just have to find a positive way to help them,” she believes.

Gehy's “partners” are her alma mater, Jamaica High School,

Photo courtesy of the Daily News

**Because she spoke only French and Creole, Gehy was taunted by her sixth-grade classmates, who called her “French fries.” Today she is savvy about the strategies that help transplanted children and their parents begin to feel at home in America.**

and four elementary schools in South Ozone Park, Long Island City, and Coney Island. On her rounds, the social worker checks with the principal and assistant principal to see “if there are any new things they'd like us to address.” At each school, she meets with Partnership's two staff members and two interns, and at times works directly with classes. Gehy says she has never felt threatened, though she realizes that fights, gangs, arrests, and disruptions have earned some of these schools a place on the “persistently dangerous” list.

Her knack for talking with young people guides them in dealing with anger and frustration. “When you take them aside, and have a conversation, you teach them how to defuse their temper, you tell them they have to find an alternate way of addressing this,” Gehy explains. “There are better ways of handling a crisis,” she'll tell them. “Leave the room, go speak to someone, talk yourself out of it, and think of something else.”

Too many parents “are not involved when their kids are in high school,” Gehy says. “Students really want someone to listen to them. The fact that we're there, and they're comfortable enough to come in and talk with us—I think we're doing a good job on that.”

Her own parents—professionals who highly value education—were able to send her to private school in Haiti. “My life was comfortable. We had all the basic needs. We were the fortunate ones,” she says, as she thinks of how much her homeland needs political stability, social services, and humanitarian aid.

In mapping out her college plans, Gehy completed her associate's degree before enrolling at Queens College. “I always knew I wanted to go into the helping professions, but I didn't know about social work until Queens,” she recalls. “It was a great experience,” she says, commending her professors and the support she received.

Extending a support network to struggling youngsters motivates Gehy every day. “I know I'm helping someone. I often don't see the results right away. Ten years from now, maybe someone will say, ‘I remember this lady who helped me.’” She may not have to wait that long. The Partnership grant program that Gehy is involved with is designed to assist a school for 18 months. Four of the schools she worked with last year are no longer considered dangerous—months ahead of schedule. Throughout the five boroughs, Gehy says with pride, Partnership “really changes lives.”

—Donna Shoemaker





## SOLO ARTIST IN A Laughable Career

### Baltsar Beckeld '00/'05 scores success in comedy

Some of Baltsar Beckeld's ancestors were Vikings. Some were Jews. Is it any wonder then that this Swedish boy from Stockholm discovered America and decided to become a comic?

Although he has two degrees in music and loves his job at the Louis Armstrong House Museum, Beckeld follows his bliss on stage at Caroline's on Broadway, Gotham Comedy Club, New York Comedy Club, and other venues where comics bare their souls for laughs. So, ladies and gentlemen—Here's Baltsar at Caroline's. Let's give him a big hand.

"Thank you. So, people always ask me what kind of name is Baltsar Beckeld?—and what are you doing in my apartment?"

How did he wind up in Queens for that matter? The story begins when Baltsar was 6 and knew he wanted to be an actor or a comedian. He went to a high school for performing arts in Stockholm. "I loved it. One of my fondest memories in high school," he says, "was playing the title character in *Erik XIV* by Strindberg, Sweden's *King Lear*."

After high school, an opportunity opened for Beckeld to go to college in New York. "The plan was for me to study at Yeshiva University for one year and then we would see. Obviously, I fell in love with New York."

Beckeld started at Yeshiva in 1994, but two years later decided to transfer to Queens College, where he majored in music with a concentration in composition. His primary instrument was voice. He earned a BA in 2000 and an MA in composition in 2005.

"Shortly after I graduated, I felt I really should be pursuing my childhood dream," Beckeld says. He loved music but found composition lonely work in which he would often spend hours alone at night, hunched over a score. He started to write comedy.

"It was absolutely awful and I stopped," he remembers. "In 2005 I started writing again. This time it was much better, and I felt like now I was on to something. I had never tried any of my material. I was so terrified of going up on stage. Finally, my wife, who is an actress, pushed me into a stand-up comedy class organized by Caroline's."

And the rest is history in the making. So far, Beckeld has

received plenty of praise and positive reviews. And laughter. "There's no greater feeling than making a big room full of people laugh," says Beckeld. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment to date came at the tryouts for the TV show "Last Comic Standing," where both Beckeld and his wife were among a small group of people to make it to the second round of auditions. "There were hundreds of people there, and we stood in line for over 10 hours. After our auditions, the producers asked both my wife and I to come back and audition again in front of the celebrity judges. The next day, we waited for hours for our 'big break,' but they ran out of time before we could be seen. We were so close!"

Beckeld is projects manager at the Armstrong House Museum, a national and NYC landmark administered by QC. He has been there since 2000. "With my degree in music it was a perfect fit," he says, explaining he does administrative work, "making sure the house runs."

Armstrong is one of his role models. "Louis was an incredible showman, perhaps one of the best performers ever. I'm not just talking about his musical skill. He had an incredible charisma, a large personality. He probably never did a bad show. It didn't matter if there were only five people in the audience because of a snowstorm. He still

went out and did just as good a show. He was such a consummate professional, and that is something I keep in mind."

Stuart Liebman (Media Studies) recalls that Beckeld was a very serious student who received an *A+* in his class. The other comedian who studied with Liebman, Jerry Seinfeld, only got an *A* and *A-*.

"Jerry was very much like all the other boys and girls I taught in those days," says Liebman. "There was a certain domination of Queens College by young secular Jews from Long Island and Queens, all genial, amiable, hard workers who wanted to succeed, all first in their family to go to college. It's a different, more heterogeneous mix today. They are ambitious. Many are very hard working, reluctant to act out in a comic sort of way, restrained, disciplined. When I heard that Baltsar, this sober perfectionist, was becoming a comic, you could have blown me over."

Liebman had to see this for himself. "I went to Gotham Comedy Club. He was very good, very self-assured."

"You know, there's a lot of guilt and pressure growing up in a Jewish home," says Beckeld, back on stage at Caroline's. "I remember how my mom would read *Peter Pan* to me, and I was very surprised at the end when Peter grew up and became a tax accountant. And married a nice Jewish girl. And only lived three miles away from his mother. Something just didn't seem right about that . . ."

—Margo Nash

*Baltsar will be performing at Caroline's on June 15 and July 6 at 7 pm. For more information go to [www.baltsarbeckeld.com](http://www.baltsarbeckeld.com)*

**"There's no greater feeling than making a big room full of people laugh."**

## AN ADVOCATE FOR Young Immigrants

### Cristina Jiménez '07 knows firsthand about their problems

"Immigrant children don't have a way to legalize their immigration status on their own. They live with that pressure and fear all the time," observes Cristina Jiménez '07. Faced with possible deportation, hostility, and doors slammed shut, thousands of immigrant students have found a beacon of light through an effort she co-founded three years ago.

The New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC), a grassroots effort, offers young immigrants inspiration, information, leadership training, and a boost to their aspirations. At workshops, college fairs, rallies, and civic gatherings, as well as at meetings in schools and with elected officials and the press, the youth league's volunteers get the word out. Their message: You can overcome the hurdles of applying to college. You can become involved in advocating for the issues important in your life and your community. You may not be able to vote, but you can educate those who do, says Jiménez.

Her own journey to American citizenship began right where theirs did, and she still has miles to go. In 1998 at age 13, Jiménez left her homeland of Ecuador with her parents and brother, Jonathan, who was about to enter kindergarten. In New York, their father, who had been a banker in Quito, took jobs "at a carwash, in construction, cleaning beauty salons, in a warehouse," she remembers. Her mother, who never had to work before, now finds it satisfying. "When you're an immigrant, and you come to America, you work hard to fulfill your goal to have a better life for your kids," Jiménez says. Her parents are "my two biggest heroes."

What drives Jiménez and the NYSYLC is the hope of passing the DREAM Act, the proposed national legislation sidetracked every year since its introduction in 2001. It would give undocumented students greater opportunities to pursue a college education.

Young immigrants take "a strong position at home because you become the bridge—you connect your parents with this new community and this new country," says Jiménez. "That is a major challenge and responsibility." As a sophomore at Queens College, "I figured out I'm not the only one going through this," she recalls. Many other immigrant students, as they sped ahead in learning English, were the ones guiding their families in a bewildering new world. She set out to learn about immigration issues so she could help them.

"It's a very emotional process" for undocumented students, Jiménez explains. Often, they don't realize they lack legal immigration status until they apply to college. "They get so Americanized, but despite the fact that they may have studied hard and collected awards, they won't be able to apply to all of the schools their peers applied to, or have access to all the scholarships. We help them not only in applying to college, but also in becoming advocates for themselves and their communities," she notes. The

youth league trains teachers and guidance counselors as well. "One of the successes we have had is being able to raise scholarship money for undocumented students," Jiménez says.

At QC, "the place where I grew the most was in the Political Science Club," says the former political science major. Jiménez smiles thinking of how this very active club turns "shy freshmen" into students who "run the school." She also valued the leadership class taught by Joe Bertolino, the vice president for student affairs. She was among the student leaders who had a voice in hiring him. "He's very open," she found out.

The Dream Mentorship Program, another effort that Jiménez co-founded, is hosted by QC's Equity Studies Research Center and has received funding from the Queens College Foundation. Last spring QC student volunteers for the program mentored immigrant students from a local high school, telling them all about college. "They were very eager to learn," says Jiménez. Along with workshops on campus focusing on educational and leadership issues, Dream Mentorship offered participants free metro-area transportation and lunches; cultural vistas; and help with preparing and paying for college admissions exams. Jiménez treasures the support QC has provided—from the top on down—for initiatives to aid immigrant students.



Participating in QC's Political Science Club prepared Jiménez for public appearances on behalf of young immigrants.

In guiding others toward citizenship, Jiménez has assigned herself a special project: her brother, now 14. "I'm making sure he doesn't make the same mistakes I did," she jokes about filling him in on what to expect in high school. Jonathan can follow his big sister's advocacy online, for she blogs weekly. She also writes for the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, where she consults on immigration policy. In a February 12 online article for the *American Prospect*, Jiménez stated the case for how legalizing the status of millions of hardworking immigrants "is a cost-effective path to short-term stimulus and long-term recovery."

Along the path to realizing her own dream of law school, Jiménez is applying to a master's degree program in public policy to further her involvement with the immigrant community. "I like knowing what's going on in the world," she says.

—Donna Shoemaker



# Prize-Winning Journalist

## STEVE APPEL '09

**Graduating senior says good *Knight* to the paper he led for three years**

Next fall Steven Appel '09 won't be at the helm of the *Knight News*. There'll be no more 30-hour days putting the bi-weekly to bed, no more bleary-eyed mornings in class. And, sadly, no more working with his talented friends at the paper, with whom he voluntarily shares his monthly stipend. Appel, editor in chief of the QC newspaper for three years, is graduating, along with Managing Editor Kate Schnur, Business Manager Jason Hochberg, and Executive Editor Elisheva Ackerman, who have all helped turn what

used to be a sleepy 16-page college paper into a muck-raking award winner with more pages than most college papers.

"It's going to be tough," says Appel, 23. "You put so many hours, so much of yourself into a product to build it up. But we have good people who are continuing on next year who will build on the foundation that we've laid."

A wiry young dynamo with a GPA of 3.993, Appel already has an enviable resume. For starters, he is a member of his local Community Board in Manhattan. He's a founder and past president of the QC chapter of STAND (an anti-genocide coalition), founder and administrator of Constructive Dialogue (an online forum promoting Muslim, Christian, and Jewish dialogue), a teaching assistant, and a past tour leader and teacher at the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

And there's more. In 2007 he was selected student ambassador to a Ford Foundation Grant Committee on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, and last summer divided his time between working as an intern in Senator Charles Schumer's Washington office, helping abused women, and volunteering at a social services center in Cairo. Then there were those two years after high school studying at yeshivas in Israel.

The Queens College student paper was founded in 1937 as the *Phoenix*, later renamed the *Quad*, and in 2001 became the *Knight News*. The next transformation began when Appel—a double major in international politics and cultural anthropology, with an honors in the social sciences minor—joined the paper.

"I came on as a freshman in 2005 doing copy editing," he says. The next year outgoing editor in chief Amy Goldstein suggested Appel run for her position.

"I didn't see myself running," Appel recalls. "I was just a freshman." He was elected by one vote. His goal, he told the staff right at the beginning, was to turn the *Knight News* into an award-winning paper.

"When we took over, I started changing it. Initially, it started off the size it was before. We grew it to its present size. I typed up a long-term plan. We were going to look at some of the best

college papers. It was not rocket science," he says.

Under Appel's leadership, the *Knight News* has been averaging 42 pages, thick with campus, city, national, and international news, and a religion column, of which Appel is editor. There are also special supplements, photo essays, and "Knight Life," the colorful cultural pullout.

The *Knight News* has won numerous awards. This spring, for the second year in a row, the newspaper won the 2008 American Scholastic Press Association First Place with Special Merit Award. The *Knight Life* pullout was named "Best Supplement" for a college newspaper. And, in a first for a CUNY newspaper, the *Knight News* won the 2008 New York Press Association's Second Place Award for General Excellence. Twice the paper was a finalist for the country's most prestigious college journalism honor, the Associated Collegiate Press Association's Pacemaker Award, again making the *Knight News* CUNY's first paper to be a finalist since the awards began in 1927. Appel was also singled out for recognition: Last year he received the Kempton Pride of the University Award for Commentary, "for contributions of outstanding undergraduate student journalists at the City University of New York."

Right now Appel is looking to the future. "We are working hard to train new people [at the paper] to make sure there is a smooth transition," Appel says. But he is not pursuing journalism. He has applied to the New York City Urban Fellows Program. "Ultimately, I would like to get involved in elected office. Any system can be perfected," he says. "That is what has been so appealing working at the paper: to be able to take something and grow it and strive for excellence."

—Margo Nash



# Dutiful Brother and Citizen

## DONAT KUBWIMANA '08

**A Catholic monk rebuilds his life in Queens after surviving war in Rwanda**

In 1994 Brother Donat Kubwimana '08 led 10 men, also in their 20s, on a dangerous flight through military checkpoints. The roads were strewn with bodies. Before fleeing Rwanda, these Congregation of Holy Cross brothers had been down to one meal a day. Yet they shared their food with others seeking refuge from the marauding Hutu militia. Now a master's degree student in French at Queens College, Brother Donat quietly tells of this flight and of how his older brother and five "dear, dear friends" lost their lives in the Rwandan genocide.

Over the next few years, Brother Donat would go from Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) to Kenya and Uganda, then back to Kenya, despite the risk of deportation because he had no identity papers.

As a refugee in Africa, "I was in kind of an isolation," he recalls. "It was so hard for me to find new friends like the ones I had lost." He did social work in parishes, taught children, and learned two more languages—English and Swahili. He had to drop out of high school but took construction and computer programming classes. In each new culture, he persevered.

If there was one thing that had shaken his faith, Brother Donat admits, it was "during the war, seeing people dying, such innocent people—and human beings could not intervene." He questioned, "Where is God in this situation? We were praying every day. I could never understand how so many innocent people died, and how I could escape. But God protected me."

In 2003 he and another Holy Cross brother came to America, thanks to religious visas secured by their order. Since then, Brother Donat has improved his English, earned an associate's degree at Queensborough Community College, and graduated from QC with a BA in French and a minor in education.

While a community college student, Brother Donat tutored young men for their GED; that was the same way he finally earned his high school diploma. "It gives me encouragement, it motivates me," he explains. He also tutored in mathematics, algebra, and geometry at Queensborough, and tutored at QC as well. Each Friday at a Haitian parish, he teaches children their catechism. This spring he taught at Holy Cross High School in Flushing.

Studying at QC has been "an opportunity to learn more about people of different backgrounds, different cultures. I was trying to talk with everybody," Brother Donat says in his open-hearted way. QC's French teachers "are so good, so respectful," he says. "For me, it is wonderful."

Six years ago, when his plane landed in New York on a 20-degree day, Brother Donat had never known cold weather. It looked so warm and sunny outside, he recalls, that "I didn't want to put on the jacket" his welcoming committee had brought.



Since then, arctic blasts have become just another hardship surmounted with grace. His faith has led him to Montreal several times, to serve at St. Joseph Oratory, a pilgrimage site. "I avoided going to Canada in the winter," he confides, "but last January, I went there. It was 20 below, but you just keep moving."

Brother Donat resides in Flushing with three other Holy Cross brothers. The order has been there for him at each station, even before he took his vows at age 25 in Rwanda. Through his Catholic upbringing and scouting, he found a path to service. "When I was young, I went to communities in need, to sick people, to help them as a scout," he says. He chose to become a brother, rather than a priest, to assure he would have opportunities for teaching. What he finds most satisfying about education is "working with young people to aim higher, to make sure they prepare for the future, whatever the future will offer them."

One of his goals is to encourage vocations. In Africa, "We have many people who want to become priests and brothers," he observes. "But here, or in Europe, it is hard. If you get one, he doesn't stay. The world needs religious people."

Holy Cross brothers and priests "showed me love," Brother Donat affirms. "Without them, I could have died in Rwanda or Congo. What they did for me, I wanted to do for others."

In January Brother Donat became a U.S. citizen. At his graduation last May, QC's European Languages and Literatures Department recognized him for his French tutoring. That day brought another badge of his American life. His Holy Cross brothers "were there to celebrate with me," he relates. One of them captured his joy at receiving his diploma—and posted the video on YouTube

—Donna Shoemaker

For God and country: Brother Donat holds the proof of his citizenship outside the courthouse where he became an American.



## Noteworthy Relationship

*Scholarship donors Sara and Michael Horlick contributed to the achievements of clarinetist Asuka Yamamoto '08*

Long on talent and short on cash, Asuka Yamamoto '08 needed assistance to pursue a bachelor's degree in music at QC. The promising young clarinetist got that help from numerous sources, including a scholarship created by Queens College Foundation staffer Sara Horlick and her husband, Michael.

A native of Osaka, Japan, Yamamoto studied piano for six years before taking up the clarinet at age 9. "I liked the sound and shape of the instrument," she explains. By the time she was in middle school, she had decided to make a career of it. "I couldn't think of anything else but music," she continues. "I visualized myself playing clarinet on a stage in a big hall." Then the would-be soloist hit a roadblock: In 2003 she was rejected by the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. "I thought of quitting, but my teacher suggested I go abroad," Yamamoto says.

As it happened, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra was appearing in Tokyo that spring to perform a program featuring Charles Neidich (Music) in Aaron

Copland's clarinet concerto. "The concert was amazing," Yamamoto recalls. "When he got on stage, I got goosebumps. Afterward, I went to speak with him and said, 'I want to study with you.'" The next month, Neidich's wife Ayako Oshima—a QC adjunct in clarinet performance—came to Tokyo and made time to give Yamamoto an audition in the form of a lesson. The teenager passed; in January 2004 she flew to New York to enroll in QC.

Living on her own in an unfamiliar country, she experienced all the predictable adjustment problems. "I felt homesick; I'm very close to my parents," Yamamoto says. "Cooking, doing the laundry—everything was hard." These difficulties were magnified by the stress of functioning in a foreign language. Before Yamamoto could matriculate, she had to take courses at the college's English Language Institute. "In Japan, I had studied basic English, but here I had to do everything in it; it was overwhelming," she says. Through intensive coursework, followed by constant interaction with English-speaking classmates at QC, she acquired enough skill to maintain a GPA of 3.9.

Meanwhile, she faced financial challenges, which she couldn't overcome by hard work alone. "My family is not rich," comments Yamamoto, the daughter of an architect and a stay-at-home mom. "I talked to Professor Smaldone [the director of the Copland School] in my sophomore year and said I might have to go back to Japan."

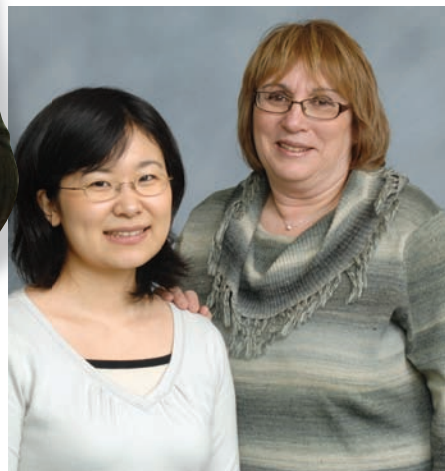
Students like Yamamoto were the candidates the Horlicks had in mind in 2005 when they established the Erik S. Horlick Memorial Scholarship in honor of their son, a drama major who loved music. "I wanted to help students who were passionate about something and really needed the money," says Sara Horlick, who didn't attend QC. Neither did her husband or son, who was enrolled at the William Esper Studio for Acting when he died at 26. Nonetheless, the family set up an endowment at Queens. "I see the kids walking around on campus, and felt more of a connection here," Horlick notes.

With the Horlick scholarship and other awards, Yamamoto stayed at QC and thrived. "The theory and history classes were very advanced, so I learned a lot," she reports. "The music department is small, so I got to play in almost every concert."

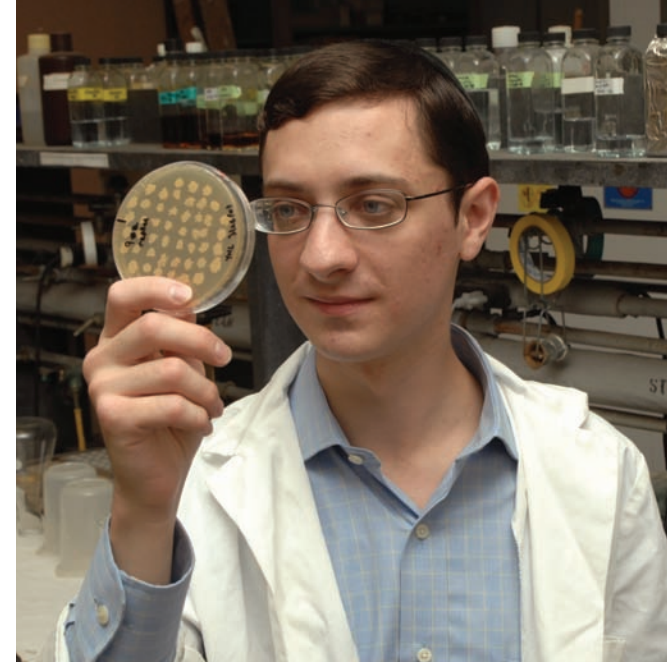
Indeed, as a senior she had the opportunity to play the Copland concerto with the QC Orchestra. In May, in a reunion with QC conductor Maurice Peress, she flew to Beijing to perform the solo again, this time accompanied by the China National Symphony.

Today, as a graduate student at the Juilliard School, Yamamoto remains grateful to her QC professors and benefactors. "I'm really happy that I studied at Queens College," she declares. "I still keep in touch. Scholarships saved my life. It was like a dream come true for me."

And Sara Horlick is happy to have helped Yamamoto pursue her career. "It's a great joy that something good is happening for her," says Horlick. "Helping someone else is very, very rewarding."



Above: Asuka Yamamoto, in concert black, does what she loves best; at right, she poses with one of her benefactors, Queens College Foundation staffer Sara Horlick.



## A Student Scholar's Solid Achievements

*Yehoshua N. Laker '10 is a case study in high-level multitasking. To Laker, 21, success is "just a question of expending effort."*

The range of his campus activities is extraordinary. He is a double major in biology and English, a sprinter on the men's track team, and the assistant copy editor for the student newspaper. He also works in the cancer research lab of Wilma Saffran (Chemistry and Biochemistry).

Prior to entering QC, Laker took two years off from his academic career to study Jewish thought "to improve my mind and to improve my soul." Beginning his studies at Queens in 2006, he was presented with a Queens College Scholar's award. These four-year awards are the college's primary scholarship fund, made possible by generous donations from QC alumni and friends. They are presented each year to a limited number of high-achieving entering students who rank in the top 10% of their graduating class, have achieved a high school average of 90, and have outstanding SAT scores. This aid, Laker says, "financed my way through college and lifted the burden of tuition and fees. It meant I did not have to think about funding, and took a lot of stress away."

Last April Laker also won a prestigious Goldwater Scholarship. Created in honor of the late Arizona Republican senator and presidential candidate, this \$7,500 award is given to the winners of a national search for top students in math, science, and engineering.

President James Muyskens asserts that "Laker's achievements testify to his own hard work, and the rich research environment and mentorship opportunities available on campus." This sentiment jibes with Laker's own philosophy, which is "to put in as much effort as you can."

Looking ahead, Laker plans to apply to joint MD/PhD programs at top institutions (for September 2010 admission). Upon completing his graduate studies, he expects to engage in both biochemistry research and clinical practice. He sets his ultimate goal quite high, and sees himself "discovering new ideas and innovations in healing that would make this a better, healthier world."


## An Alum's Generous Gift

Joan Catherine Welsh '52 loved Queens College. During her years on campus she was a member of Epsilon Phi Sigma and Phi Alpha Theta, as well as vice president of the Inter-Fraternity Council. She was also a copyeditor/news editor at the Crown and a member of the Newman Club. Joan remembered her alma mater in her will, from which the college recently received a gift of over \$1 million.




A gift to Queens College in your estate plan is a thoughtful way of showing your commitment to the well being of the college. You may use your gift to establish a student award or scholarship fund, or earmark your gift for your favorite department. To thank you for your generosity, we will enroll you in the Jefferson Society, whose members receive invitations to presidential receptions, special events, and concerts.

On Wednesday, June 17, the college will hold the first of a series of estate-planning events. To attend or to be notified of future estate-planning events, call 718-997-3920.



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**1945: Anne Carter**, the Fred C. Hecht Professor Emerita of Economics at Brandeis University, was honored in January by the American Economics Association's Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession. The committee gave her its annual Carolyn Shaw Bell Award, which recognizes an individual who has furthered the status of women in the field of economics. **... 1948: Ethel Brage LeStrange** writes: "Bonjour! I'm lucky to be still teaching French—a course in Advanced Conversational French at Blue Ridge Community College in Hendersonville, NC and Le français élémentaire here at my retirement home, Givens Estates in Asheville, NC. Vive la France! Vive the Department of Romance Languages of Queens College!" **... 1952: Joanne A. Ursprung** received her PhD from the University of Illinois in 1956 and taught physical science at Western Michigan University for 20 years. After retiring in 1990, she and her husband, a former Upjohn Company Research Scientist, moved to Kauai, Hawaii, where they spent the next 14 years. They moved to Surprise, AZ, in 2003, in

order to be closer to family. They have two sons and eight grandchildren. **... 1954: Mario Monti** notes that he was a student, on and off, at QC from 1948–1969. He earned three degrees in education and taught in the Glen Cove school district on Long Island for over 30 years. Since 1992 his passion has been that American icon: the Diner. He has published three editions of *A Directory of Diners* and recently co-authored *Diners of New York*. **... 1955: Kenneth Kustin**, professor emeritus at Brandeis University, is the co-editor of *Vanadium: The Versatile Metal*, which came out in 2007. He recently donated a copy of the book to the college. **... 1956: Barry Manson** recently retired as president of ABM Management Corp., a real estate property management company that manages cooperative and condominium associations in Queens and Nassau Counties. He continues to serve as general counsel to ABM and to practice transactional real estate law at his office in Great Neck, NY. Barry and Bunny, his wife of 43 years, live in Old Westbury. **... Roy T. Traynor** has also recently retired from his law practice (he received his JD from the University of Wisconsin Law School) after "a very significant and satisfying career as a general practitioner, labor lawyer, bankruptcy trustee, trial attorney, and appellate attorney before all levels of state and federal courts. I also made occasional forays into local, state, and national politics. I am now working hard at my first love—writing—mostly at my lakeside rustic camp-residence in

the heart of the wilderness beauty of the Northern Highlands forest, seven miles east of the unincorporated Town of Elcho". **... 1958: Inge Auerbacher**, a survivor of the Terezin concentration camp, was recently part of the first class of inductees into the New York City Hall of Fame. She was selected for her contributions to the betterment of the city and for serving as a role model for children. Inge, a chemist for 38 years, is the author of four books and the subject of a documentary. She is also known for her lectures that stress the positive and celebrate diversity. **... 1961: Alice Schmitt Dashiell** writes: "Over the years I have taught everything from preschool to college students, parenting courses, management training, and various library science topics. I raised two sons in Massachusetts, Germany, and Maryland (and now have two grandsons). With a master's degree in library science from University of Maryland, I was a school media specialist in Maryland and a reference librarian for the CIA. My final position at CIA was program manager for the Best Management Practices endeavor. My husband William and I retired to Thomaston, ME, where we have kept ourselves more than busy by helping a range of organizations: I am on the Library Board of Trustees, writing a history of the library and several grant proposals; serve as the site coordinator for the Coastal Senior College and as a classroom assistant; do lots of gardening; take senior college courses and attend the annual statewide conference; use the Health Club pool and equipment; read lots of books; welcome visits of family and friends, which is also a great excuse to see more local sights and fairs and festivals. We have met many federal retirees and many former Long Islanders in this area. Intelligent people know a good thing!" **... 1962: Richard Reif** is a volunteer tutor at PS 164 in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens. He is a member of Learning Leaders, an organization that recruits adults to assist teachers in New York City public schools. Dick retired from the McGraw-Hill Companies after

35 years as a staff writer/editor. He earned a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and served as a public affairs officer in the U.S. Air Force. **... 1963: Paul Simon** was chosen to perform the first concert at the newly restored Beacon Theatre on Broadway on February 13. **... 1964: Marc A. Dichter** is professor of neurology and pharmacology at the University of Pennsylvania and co-director of the Pennsylvania Epilepsy Center. He received his MD and PhD at the New York University School of Medicine. His research has been continually funded by NIH since 1975, and he has won numerous awards. He gave the Soriano Lecture at the 132nd Annual Meeting of the American Neurological Association in Washington, DC, in October 2007. Marc is married to **Carole R. Dichter '64**. **... Ronnie S. Maibaum** was selected by the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers to receive the 2008 Dorothy S. Ludwig Memorial Award. The award is given annually to an individual who provides outstanding service to the foreign language teaching profession. Ronnie lives in Far Rockaway, NY. **... Lynne Richards** (née Blakeley) is a professor of chemistry at York College in New York City. Her research area is transition metal chemistry. **... 1965: Philip Zuchman** has been promoted to professor of studio arts and aesthetics at the Art Institute of Philadelphia. **... 1966: Leo Chalupa** left the University of California, Davis—where he was a distinguished professor of neurobiology and ophthalmology, as well as the chair of neurobiology, physiology, and behavior in the College of Biological Sciences—to become vice president of research at George Washington University. **... Barry E. Stein** (MA '69) is the



chair of the Wake Forest University School of Medicine and an affiliate professor with the Women's Health Center of Excellence. He was recently elected president of the Association of Anatomy, Cell Biology, and Neurobiology Chairpersons. He earned his PhD at the CUNY Graduate Center. **... 1967: John Webster Hochstadt** has had a varied career over four decades, serving as a psychiatric social worker, dairy goat farmer, wood-heat contractor, biological monitor on seismic work in the Rocky Mountains, and, after completing an MPA at Queen's University in Ontario, a senior fund-raiser at the University of Toronto and Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto. A recovering vegetarian and former homesteader, John collects Inuit art, publishes fiction and non-fiction, and edits a professional journal for Canadian fund-raisers. This year he began offering personal coaching for surviving the long emergency following peak oil. He lives on the eastern slopes of the Rockies in Alberta with his partner of 37 years, Lea, and would enjoy hearing from classmates at sheojuk@hotmail.com. **... Carol M. Jantzen** (MA '70) is an internationally recognized ceramics expert at the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River National Laboratory in Aiken, SC, and an honorary professor in the department of chemistry at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. She has over 32 years of experience in solidification of high-level radioactive, low-level radioactive, and hazardous wastes. In 2008 she received the Wendell D. Weart Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her commitment to solving nuclear waste management issues. She has previously received the Alfred University Scholes Lecture Award in Industrial Ceramics (2000), the Nuclear and Environmental Technology Division D.T. Rankin Award (2003), and the ACerS Bleining Award for lifetime achievement in ceramic engineering (2005). **... Alan R. Levy** is in private practice in periodontology and serves as assistant clinical professor at the Ohio State University College of Dentistry.

Both of his children followed their father by majoring in chemistry: his daughter Gillian at Columbia before going on to medical school at Yale, and his son Samuel at Yale. **... Carol Schep Roth** will have her eighth children's book, *All Aboard to Work, Choo Choo!*, published this fall. **... 1968: John F. Collins** is the executive VP of Winthrop University Hospital in Mineola, NY. **... Eugene Moehring** recently received the Henry Reid Silver State Research Award from the University of Nevada–Las Vegas. The \$10,000 award is given to a faculty member who has performed research that is valuable to both the university and the community. Considered one of the nation's top urban historians, Eugene has written a number of books about Las Vegas and the West. He holds a PhD in history from the CUNY Graduate Center. **... 1970: Fred Curchack** (MA '72) has created 70 original theatre pieces. His performances have been featured at dozens of international theatre festivals. Fred has received the Gold Medal at the International Festival of Solo Theatre, the American Theatre Wing Award, Critics' Awards in L.A., S.F., Dallas, and Austin, and his work has been hailed as one of the "top ten of the year" in the *New York Times*. He has received funding from Creative Capital, the National Endowment for the Arts, Arts International, the Henson Foundation, and he is a Guggenheim Fellow. Fred is professor of art and performance at the University of Texas at Dallas. **... Merle Exit** (Meyerowitz), who continues to reside in Queens, is a freelance journalist and radio personality who recently published her autobiography, *Whirl With Merle—It's A Humorous Life* (lulu.com). She is also the director of public relations for the New York Sharks Women's Professional Football team. **... 1971: Lucille L. Abellonio** is the superintendent of Clairton City Schools in Pennsylvania. She holds a master's in special education from Brooklyn College.



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and a PhD in administrative and policy studies from the University of Pittsburgh ... **Pat O'Hara** (MA '76) is the senior geochemist at Hunt Gold Corporation, a gold-mining and exploration company in Arizona. He holds a PhD from Arizona State University and is the author or co-author of over 70 articles and maps. Pat lives in Prescott, AZ ... **Laurie (Lindenauer) Wynn** (MS Ed), a certified investment management analyst at Aventura, was recently named to Barron's/Winner's Circle Top-1,000 Advisers List. Laurie, who joined Aventura in 1994, has 24 years of experience as a private wealth advisor. She is a member of the board of directors and chairperson of the investment committee for the Illinois Eye Institute, and is active on the investment committee for the New World Symphony ... **1972: Steven Fischkoff** is vice president of clinical development at Palatin Technologies in Cranbury, NJ. He has over 15 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry and came to Palatin from Medarex, where most recently he held the position of VP of clinical

science ... **Diana (Dede) Berg MacPherson** recently retired from teaching in Texas after 31 years. She was the department chair for health/physical education at the time of her retirement. Dede taught mathematics, health, and physical education at Clear Creek HS for 25 years and earned an MA from the University of Houston in Clear Lake in 1986. Currently Dede is officiating high school volleyball and teaching CPR/FA for the American Heart Association ... **Bernice D. Siegal** was elected to the Supreme Court Eleventh Judicial District (Queens) last November. She previously served as supervising judge of the Civil Court, Queens County, from March 2007 to December 2008, and was elected Judge of the Civil Court of the City of New York in 2001. She holds an MPA from New York University and a JD from New York Law School ... **1974: Adlai Climan** has built on his MBA from California State, Northridge and his 34 years with the Internal Revenue Service to open his own business, Tax Settlements and Resolutions, in Beverly Hills, CA. He lives in West Los Angeles with his



wife, Vania, whom he married in 2006 ... **1975: Debra Jason** toasted the new year and more on January 1: her business, The Write Direction (www.writedirection.com), celebrated its 20th anniversary that date. Debra specializes in web and direct marketing communications ... **1976: Robert Bertoldi** is interim chief executive officer of WellGen, a North Brunswick, NJ, biotech company. WellGen's strategy is to target genes that promote good health, then develop nutritional supplements that help them perform their jobs better. Robert is also a founder and president of Amphion Innovations, a firm that invests in medical and technology startups ... **1977: Stephen A. Chidylo**, medical director of Central New Jersey Plastic Surgery, was recently appointed the chief of plastic and



reconstructive surgery at Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Neptune, NJ. He is the first chief of plastic surgery at this institution who has been dual trained and certified in both plastic surgery and dentistry. After finishing his plastic surgery residency, he completed fellowship training in the field of cranio-maxillofacial reconstruction. His practice specializes in cosmetic and reconstructive surgery of the face and breasts ... **Emilia Nuccio** was recently appointed to the newly created position of vice president, international sales, for Echo Bridge Entertainment. Echo Bridge is an independent distribution company that acquires and distributes motion pictures, TV programming, and video-on-demand content worldwide. Previously, Emilia headed her own consulting firm, Girasole International, whose clients included Channel 13, BBC Worldwide, and Ragdoll ... **1978: Mary Cunningham**, a retired management analyst, is a community columnist for the *Charlotte Observer* ... **1980: Beth Ann Cohen** (MA) was an elementary education major who is now



working with her husband, **Barry J. Cohen** '78, in a successful e-commerce business. Beth specializes in health and nutrition and her website is www.bcohen.qhealthzone.com. Barry specializes in gifts and incentives and his website is www.bcohen.ordermygift.com ... **1982: Brian Posner** in the chief financial officer of Power Medical Interventions, based in Langhorne, PA. The company is the world's only provider of computer-assisted, power-actuated surgical stapling products. Previously Brian was the executive VP and CFO at Pharmacopeia, Inc. ... **1984: John B. Roche** is the chief financial officer of Gramercy Capital Corp., a commercial real estate finance and property investment company in Manhattan. John received an MBA from Columbia University in 1996 ... **1985: Mark Rose** is now the CEO of the Toronto-based brokerage Avison Young Inc. His goal is to turn the company into a global force in commercial real estate services. Mark is also a member of the QC Foundation board ... **1986: Susan Karlin** (MA) notes that annual reports designed by her firm, Suka Design, won recognition at the Black Book AR100 Award Show. In seven years, Suka has picked up a total of 20 prizes from Black Book ... **1989: Joseph Wolf** is part of the Dental Aesthetics and Facial Group that recently opened an office in midtown Manhattan. A magna cum laude graduate of QC and graduate of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, he served as chief resident of the department of internal medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center and has more recently worked at the Albany Medical Center department of plastic and reconstructive surgery ... **1992: Tracy Cartas** is director of special education for the Independent School District of Tyler, TX ... **Ronniel Levy** has become a partner in the law firm of Hodgson Russ LLP. Based in the firm's New York City office, Ronniel is a member of the



corporate and securities practice group; he focuses on public and private offerings, finance, mergers, acquisitions, hedge and private equity funds, corporate restructurings, broker dealer regulation, and NASD arbitration ... **1998: Piter Marek** has been making a name for himself on television with appearances on "Law and Order: Criminal Intent," "The Education of Max Bickford," and "The Grid." Piter, who was born in Lebanon but fled with his family to avoid the civil war there, recently appeared on Broadway in a critically acclaimed revival of *Cyrano de Bergerac* ... **2000: John Antony** got press recognition for the great success—despite meager district resources—of the concert choir he directs at Central Islip High School. NYSUT.org, the website of New York State United Teachers, published a story last year about the 70-member ensemble ... **2003: Sandy Cohen** is director of management at Wachtler Knopf Equities LLC in Farmingdale, NY. He manages all of the company's capital and tenant improvement projects and oversees the operation of the firm's Long Island portfolio ... **2005: Greg Diamond** (MA '07), a guitarist, recently released an album of Latin jazz, *Dancando Com Ale*, on Chasm Records. Five of the ten songs are Diamond originals ... **Alison McKay** (MLS) is the author of *Bayside*, which was published as part of Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series. An archivist and collection curator at the Bayside Historical Society, Alison covers the history of the neighborhood and highlights some of its famous residents, including the boxer "Gentleman Jim" Corbett, silent film star Pearl White (who could often be seen walking her pet pig through town), and W.C. Fields. Alison, of course, lives in Bayside with her husband, Charles, and two children ... **2008: Rebecca Eller** (MLS) recently became the children's librarian at the Larchmont Public Library in New York ... **Kenneth Teleski** (MSEd) is currently teaching English to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at IS 25 in Flushing. Ken reports that he enjoyed his time at Queens and

## IN MEMORIAM Virginia Frese Palmer



Virginia Frese Palmer '42, a speech therapist, philanthropist, and member of the Queens College Foundation Board since 2003, died on March 13. In February 1938 Virginia Frese did something quite unusual for a 15-year-old: she started going to college. The Frese family had felt the sting of the Great Depression

and Queens College, which had opened its doors only months before, was the one chance Virginia would ever have to receive a college education. After earning a degree in speech pathology in 1942, Virginia was awarded a fellowship that included free tuition at Columbia University, where she earned her master's degree. She then went to work for the Great Neck public school system and the National Institute for Human Relations in Manhattan, before marrying Gordon Palmer. The couple moved to Philadelphia, where Virginia joined Temple University as a speech pathologist. A few years later the Palmers adopted the first of their two children, and thereafter Virginia ran a private practice from her home until she and Gordon retired and moved to Arizona in 1977.

Virginia served for years on the board of the American Association of University Women and the Women's Studies Advisory Council at the University of Arizona. She also worked with Rainbow Acres, a home for developmentally handicapped adults, and with the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, which assists women in developing countries.

Virginia never forgot Queens College. She was very generous in supporting the Speech and Hearing Clinic and the Women and Work Program, and provided major unrestricted funds to help the college develop some of its most important projects. To thank her, the college renamed B Building Virginia Frese Hall in 2004.

When asked why she gave back so generously to her alma mater, Virginia said, "Queens College turned me from an introvert afraid to speak my mind into an activist, a feminist, and a real believer in helping others. I am so grateful."

that he had a great professor and advisor in Arthur Costigan (Secondary Education).

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## Paul Lonigan: A Rare Combination of Teaching Skills

*In our last issue we asked for your reminiscences of a professor who made a strong impression on you. Robert A. Michels '69, a professor of romance languages at Miami-Dade College, here sings the praises of French Professor Emeritus Paul Lonigan.*



As a kid from Flushing floundering over his major, I finally got my BA in French from Queens College in 1969. My five-year ride to success had been pretty bumpy. It was during a time when the college's professors were aloof for the most part, and the college, on the whole, impersonal. However, on entering the master's

program in French, I was fortunate to find someone who offered me what I needed: an extraordinary acumen for literary analysis, combined with sharp wit, and a profound understanding of the psyche of a learner, a rare combination.

My first encounter with Prof. Paul R. Lonigan occurred in one of his graduate courses, the "History of the French

Language." Although expectations were high and the material intricate, students felt a strong sense of achievement and pride when put to the test, thanks to Prof. Lonigan's sound and methodical presentations. I believe he saw in me a person who could meet a challenge and produce good work. His support and confidence led to my acceptance at the Graduate School, where I was able to see him at his best, displaying his acute sense of the essence and the rich tapestry of thought in the Middle Ages. In his doctoral class on Villon, I learned to understand the poet as I never had, in all the nuance and subtlety of his greatness, which Prof. Lonigan so enthusiastically transmitted with intelligence and humor.

Eventually, Prof. Lonigan would become my dissertation director for my work on Marie de France. Without his constant backing and guidance, I would have struggled as I had in my undergraduate years. I truly appreciate that in the midst of all his obligations, he took the time to extend his hand to help me.





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Scenes from a heroic life: (left) To protest restrictions on African American voters, Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, John Lewis, and others walked from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in March 1965; (center) 20 years later, Lewis ran a successful race to represent Atlanta, Georgia, in Congress. This spring (far right) Lewis watches President Barack Obama sign the Civil Rights History Project Act of 2009, which requires the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian to set up an oral history bank.

## College Honors Civil Rights Legend John Lewis

A lifelong advocate of the philosophy of nonviolence and equality for all, Congressman John Lewis has been a preeminent leader of the modern American civil rights movement. Along with Whitney Young, A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer, and Roy Wilkins, he has often been called one of the Big Six leaders of the movement. At Commencement on May 28, Queens College presented the last surviving member of the Big Six with an honorary doctorate.

John Lewis was born the son of sharecroppers on February 21, 1940. In 1961 he volunteered to participate in the Freedom Rides, which challenged segregation at interstate bus terminals across the South. Lewis risked his life on those rides simply by sitting in seats reserved for whites. He was beaten severely by angry mobs and over the years was arrested more than 40 times for challenging the injustice of segregation.

In 1965 Lewis was part of one of the key moments of the movement. He and Hosea Williams led more than 600 peaceful protestors across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on March 7. They intended to march from Selma to Montgomery to demonstrate the need for voting rights in the state, but were attacked by state troopers in a brutal confrontation that became known as "Bloody Sunday." News broadcasts and photographs of the senseless attack helped hasten the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Lewis was elected to Congress in November 1986 and has served as U.S. Representative of Georgia's Fifth Congressional District since then. His 1998 memoir, *Walking with the Wind*, won the Lillian Smith Book Award for outstanding writing about the American South.