

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

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### Ricardo L. Cortez '72

Rick was born in New York City, and his family moved to Bayside Queens when he was 10 years old. He was the first in his family to attend college.

Rick's father immigrated from Argentina in the 1930s to achieve "The American Dream." His mother's family immigrated to Minnesota from Norway in the early 1800s. Their American Dream was shattered by the Great Depression. They lost their farm in the late 1930s, and Rick's mother moved to New York City, where she met and married Rick's father in 1947.

Rick started guitar lessons at an early age. At age 14 he was hired as a studio musician in New York City. In 1965 and 1966, he toured with popular bands, including the Coasters, Mitch Ryder, Kenny Rogers, Sly and the Family Stone, and Jay and the Americans.

Graduating Bayside High School, Rick entered Queens College in the fall of 1967 majoring in English, then switching to mathematics and philosophy. In his sophomore year, he fell in love with a beautiful young woman named Josette who was visiting from Paris. They swiftly got married. Their daughter Vanessa was born in 1970, and as a (very) young father, Rick realized he needed to get a "real" job. He quit guitar and spent his Junior and Senior years working fulltime nights at the Equitable Paper Bag factory in Long Island City.

It was grueling, but Rick is forever grateful to Queens College and its faculty without whose attentiveness, kindness, and generosity, he would not be where he is today.

Accepted to the graduate program at Columbia University, Rick had to forgo his ambition to get a PhD in mathematical logic, realizing (once again!) he needed to get a "real" job to support his family. Luckily, Merrill Lynch hired him in 1971. He had just turned 21. Thus began his 55-year-and-counting!-career on Wall Street.

For about half his career, Rick worked for large firms such as Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs. But he always valued independence, and for the last 25 years he has been a partner in his own businesses, managing money for the clients of large banks like Morgan Stanley, UBS, and Wells Fargo.

Rick has mentored young executives through the Money Management Institute and military veterans through American Corporate Partners USA. He holds the Certified



Investment Management Advisor (CIMA) designation from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. For 15 years he was an adjunct professor at Harvard University and taught Investment Policy at the Wharton School for eight years.

This year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> year that Rick has been a guest lecturer in Queens College's Risk Management program. He has served as Chairman of the Queens College Business Advisory Board. In 2020 he was awarded the President's Medal, the school's highest administrative honor.

Rick's daughter Vanessa is now an Assistant District Attorney. His daughter Natalie starred on Broadway as Anita in *West Side Story* and as Diana in the 2005 revival of *A Chorus Line*. Last year, she became a therapist.

For the last seven years, Rick has lived just outside of Palm Springs in Rancho Mirage, California with his wife of 33 years, Harriet, and their dog Mila. He is currently the CEO of Broadmark Asset Management LLC, a \$700 million investment firm.

Adhering to the Queens College motto, "We learn so that we may serve," this year Rick founded Rancho Mirage Assisted Living, a company that will provide health care services to the elderly who can no longer live on their own.

He still plays guitar in a rock band on weekends and plays tennis as often as he can.