Meeting and Greeting
President Frank H. Wu
MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH
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Working remotely, as I have for several months, has only deepened my admiration for this storied institution, which has been transforming students’ lives for 83 years. In the pages of this magazine, you will learn about the remarkable ways in which faculty, staff, and students rapidly switched to a remote education model and thrived. Our summer session was tremendously successful, offering 640 courses in four sessions and reaching the highest registration in a decade—a better than 30 percent increase over the figures for 2019. You’ll also read about our Critical Needs Fund, which will help the college and its students cope with the significant financial challenges that await us. I’m deeply grateful to all the alumni who have contributed to this important initiative.

On a more personal note, I hope that you will gain insight into my reasons for coming to Queens College from the interview on page 15. Because of the continuing threat of COVID-19, 99 percent of QC’s operations remain remote for the fall semester. I have started a strategic planning process involving students, faculty, staff, and alumni in helping to identify priority and goals for the future. Under the circumstances, I can’t encourage you to visit for all the events, from sports and performances to Homecoming, that are customary at this time of year. But I hope you’ll participate in online Alumni activities, listed at https://qccommunity.qc.cuny.edu/pages/alumni-pages/alumni-upcoming-events.

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Be careful and stay safe!

Sincerely,

President Frank H. Wu

Cover: Showcasing the linguistic diversity of Queens College, students welcome President Frank H. Wu in nine languages.

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**Saluting the Class of 2020**

In a fitting conclusion to a semester when classes moved online, Queens College used virtual methods to mark Commencement on Thursday, May 28, when it was originally scheduled. “Celebration 2020,” a digital Commencement booklet, was posted to the college’s website that morning, when diplomas were awarded to 9,904 students. Designed to be a keepsake, the photo-filled booklet listed the year’s graduates and featured congratulatory messages from Interim President William A. Tramontano, CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, New York State Senator for New York Charles Schumer, U.S. Congressman Adriano Espaillat, and New York State Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul.

The Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) graduated 2,358 students. The number of students who earned degrees online reached about 25 percent, and the class average in the Class of 2020 was 3.35. In addition, the college awarded 8,484 diplomas to students who earned degrees in one or more fields.

**Future Doctorate in the House**

**Harvey Alter ’52**
Environmental chemist Harvey Alter died on June 27, 2020, at the age of 87. His career encompassed positions at the Bakelite Company, Gillette Company, National Center for Resource Recovery, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, where he managed environmental and natural resource public policy issues. ASTM (formerly known as the American Society for Testing and Materials) gave Alter its Award of Merit for his efforts to set standards for recycling. Serving over the years as an adjunct at American University, the University of Maryland Global Campus, and Frederick Community College, he remained grateful to QC, where he met his wife. She predeceased him; he established the Corey E. Alter Scholarship in Music Education in her memory.

**Carol Lang Brock ’44**
A champion for women in the culinary arts, Carol Brock began her career as an assistant food editor at Good Housekeeping and later wrote for Parents and *The New York Daily News*. To combat gender discrimination in the food industry, she launched Les Dames d’Escoffier New York, an offshoot of the mostly male Les Amis d’Escoffier Society. By the time Brock died on July 27, 2020, at 96, the organization she founded, renamed Les Dames d’Escoffier International, had 45 chapters in the United States, Canada, Mexico, United Kingdom, and France. Its membership, by invitation only, works toward advancing women in the food, beverage, and hospitality industries.

**Joseph Brosteck ’55**
Queens College lost a devoted alumnus on March 25, 2020, when coronavirus claimed the life of Joseph Brosteck ’55. After a career in sales, marketing, and more, Brosteck retired from campus in 1986 as a consultant, eventually becoming director of special events. His influence seemingly extended to the weather: It never rained on a single Commencement that he managed. Upon retiring in 2010, he remained connected to his alma mater, acting as an unofficial historian, attending sessions of the QC retirees club, and meeting the students who benefited from the scholarship he established with his wife—nee Carol Heiser, of the class of ’54—who passed away in 2012.

**Martin Cohen ’75**
Martin Cohen’s Hollywood career took him from production assistant to head of post-production at Amblin Entertainment, DreamWorks Pictures, and finally Paramount Pictures. He worked on such famous movies as *American Beauty*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and *American Beauty* and *Gladiator*. In recognition of his contributions to film and enthusiastic support of others, Cohen was awarded the Motion Picture Editors Guild’s Fellowship and Service Award. After he died on May 17, 2020, his family established the Martin Cohen Memorial Scholarship Fund at Queens College.

**Michael Cogswell**
Michael Cogswell, who passed away on April 20, 2020, will be forever remembered for converting a jazz legend’s unoccupied house into the Louis Armstrong House Museum. An alto saxophonist, Cogswell spent nearly two decades performing with bands before completing a bachelor’s degree in music and a master’s in musicology. Hired to organize the Louis Armstrong Archives at Queens College, he earned a Master of Library Science at QC and assumed responsibility for making Satchmo’s house into an international cultural landmark. “When Louis came into Michael’s life, he came into my life, and all of a sudden there were three people in this marriage,” observed Dale Van Dyke, Cogswell’s widow. “That was fine with me.”

**Warren DeBoer**
In four decades of teaching anthropology at Queens College, Warren DeBoer mentored students and faculty alike. He was known for his ethnolinguistic and ethnobotanical work in South America, studying modern behaviors of indigenous peoples; he also conducted archaeological research on the ancient populations in North America. DeBoer, who died on May 24, 2020, is survived by his wife, fellow anthropologist Sara Stimson, whom he met in the department. The Warren DeBoer Memorial Scholarship Fund, established in his honor, offers an annual award to promising undergraduate students who may one day follow his footsteps.

**Lisa Gabow ’64**
Lisa Gabow took classes while raising a family and helping her husband, Jack, build his typography company. In a remarkable coincidence, she graduated from Queens College on the same day that her sons received their respective diplomas from high school and middle school. Passionate about education, she tutored adults in preparation for their GED Exams and on the topics of nutrition and money management; with her husband, she established the Shulamit Lisa Gabow Endowment Fund for students of Jewish Studies at QC. She was 95 when she passed away on April 3, 2020.

**Edgar Gregersen ’57**
Social scientist Edgar Gregersen received a PhD from Yale and taught linguistics at Columbia University before coming back to QC, his undergraduate alma mater, as a member of the anthropology department. He was also on the faculty at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Gregersen’s interests were wide ranging; he wrote grammars of several African languages and conducted pioneering work in the study of human sexuality around the world. He was 82 when he suffered a fatal coronary arrest on March 29, 2020.
QUEENS NEWS

William Helmreich

Distinguished CUNY Professor of Sociology William Helmreich, former director of the Center for Jewish Studies at Queens College, achieved fame by writing The New York Nobody Knows. Walking 6,000 miles in the City, and borough-specific editions devoted to the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. He was working on the Staten Island volume when he died on Saturday, March 28, 2020, of coronavirus at the age of 74. Educated at Yeshiva University and Washington University in St. Louis, Helmreich spent his entire career with City College. The New York Nobody Knows took its inspiration from childhood excursions with his father. They would ride a subway line to its last stop and wander around its neighborhood.

Florence Howe

Literary scholar and historian Florence Howe, internationally recognized as a leader of the modern feminist movement, passed away on Friday, September 11, at the age of 91. Howe, a Hunter College alumna who taught briefly at QC and later at CCNY, founded the Feminist Press, housed at The City University of New York since the 1980s. By printing and reprinting works by women as varied as Willa Cather, Barbara Ehrenreich, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, and members of Pussy Riot—a Russian punk rock performance art group—the Feminist Press provided more opportunities for female authors than any other publisher. Howe was also the first female president of the Modern Language Association, which promotes the study of language and literature.

Nettie Mayerson ’78

Queens-born community activist turned legislator Nettie Mayerson was in her fifties when she graduated from QC. Five years later, she began representing Assembly District 27—which includes Flushing, Kew Gardens, and other Outer and Central Queens neighborhoods—in Albany. Serving until her retirement in 2011, she was best known for initiating legislation concerning HIV and AIDS, particularly a bill that required doctors to notify patients when their baby was born seropositive.

Drora Barkai Pershing ’55

Drora Barkai Pershing, who played an integral part in Queens College’s music programs for more than 50 years, died in January 2020. An accomplished pianist, Pershing returned to school as a widow with three young children, earning a doctorate in musicology at CUNY and tenured on the QC music faculty. She was deeply involved in the department’s transformation into the Aaron Copland School of Music. A gift from Pershing and her second husband, harpsichordist and organist Paul Maynard—QC colleague who passed away in 1998—helps support the upkeep of the Maynard-Walker Memorial Organ in LeFrak Concert Hall. She also established a scholarship in the name of her mother, Anna Barkai.

Thelma Randby Serenbetz ’45

Thelma Serenbetz, who died in August 2019 at the age of 95, led a life marked by community service. She began volunteering with the Women’s Club of Larchmont and the United Hospital Trusts while raising four sons. In 1997, she founded the Serenbetz Family Foundation with her husband, Warren, to advance organizations that enrich the lives of children and young adults; its beneficiaries include schools, a social service agency, and Hudson River Community Sailing—the Serenbetzes were active boaters in their eighties. She was also a steadfast and long-time supporter of her alma mater and an Angel Investor.

Raymond Taylor ’54

Raymond Taylor, a pioneer in the insurance business, passed away in September 2019. Taylor began his career by selling life insurance as an agent for Equitable of Iowa. In 1956, he formed a property and casualty brokerage known as Shepherd-Taylor Inc. Over time he grew the company to insure more than 5,000 businesses and individuals around the world. Claire Taylor, his alma mater, he was a Queens College Angel Investor year after year and established the Raymond Taylor QC Scholars Endowment Fund to support students in need.

Wilma Winnick ’44

One of CUNY’s longest-serving professors, Wilma Winnick passed away on May 12, 2020, at the age of 96. Winnick began working as an adjunct in Queens College’s Psychology Department in 1946 while pursuing doctoral studies at Brown University. Five years later, she joined QC’s professorial faculty. She served at least three terms as deputy chair as well as two three-year terms as chair. Winnick was in her eighties when she retired. The room PSY 213W (SB A337) is named after her. The Psychology Department also established the Wilma A. Winnick Award in honor; the prize is given to a graduating senior who has made substantive contributions to the department.

First-Year Athlete Records Net Gains

Although the spring season was abbreviated due to COVID-19, freshman Maja Makal still came out ahead. The Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) named her to the Division II Women All-Americans team. Twenty-three female athletes were chosen across their skill singles; she was the only one from the Northeast. In fall 2019, Makal won the ITA’s East Region singles tournament, a performance that prompted the East Coast Conference to declare her Rookie of the Year.

Alumni Win Top Fellowships

Three outstanding QC graduates—Samantha Chiu ’17, Jacqueline Kimber ’20, and Netanel Sapir ’19—were awarded prestigious fellowships this year. Chiu, a former Macaulay honoree student who holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology, was accepted into the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Program, following a national competition among incoming and first-year graduate students in eleven scientific fields. She plans to study psycholinguistics, concentrating on speech processing and speech production—in particular, therapies for recovery from aphasia, the loss of speech after a stroke. She is entering a Ph.D program in cognition (psychological and brain sciences) at the University of Iowa. As an NSF Graduate Research Fellow, she will receive a stipend of $34,000 per year for three years, opportunities for international research and professional development, and the freedom to pursue her own research; in addition, her university will receive $12,000 per year.

Kim was chosen by the U.S. State Department to be a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in South Korea. As part of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, she will be placed in a Korean school to assist English teachers while also serving as a cultural ambassador by living and working with members of the local community. Kim, a Macaulay honoree student graduating in linguistics and communication disorders, plans to become a speech-language pathologist. Crediting his success to his alma mater, he was an Angel Investor year after year and established the Raymond Taylor QC Scholars Endowment Fund to support students in need.

Fulbright award will help her learn to better serve culturally diverse New York City neighborhoods upon her return.

Sapir was named a Jonas E. Salak Scholar by the City University of New York, which presents these awards in honor of the City College alumnus who developed the first polio vaccine. The Salak awards recognize students who produce original research under the mentorship of prominent scientists. At QC, Sapir majored in neuroscience and biology and minored in chemistry and psychology. He conducted research in organic chemistry under the direction of Yu Chen (Chemistry and Biochemistry). Inspired by several years’ experience as a volunteer firefighter and advanced EMT in his hometown community of Plainview, Long Island, and as an Emergency Department intern at South Shore Hospital, Sapir aims to become a physician. The Salak Scholarship will provide him with $8,000 toward attendance at the Ramanscience School of Medicine at Stony Brook University.

QC Collects National Accolades

For the 25th year in a row, Queens College has been included in Princeton Review’s Best College Guide, with a 2021 ranking of #368 on its Best in the Northeast list. The school was also recognized in the categories of Best Value College and Green College.

Attesting to the long-term value of a Queens College diploma. Business Insider https://www.businessinsider.com/collages-with-the-best-return-on-investment-2020-6#cuny-queens-college-has-a-return-on-investment-of-844-21 rated QC #368 among 24 U.S. colleges it identified for offering the best return on investment. Queens College came in fourth, with an ROI of 84.4 percent, just edging out Hunter College, the only CUNY school to outperform QC was the first-place finisher, Baruch. Meanwhile, the latest report from LendEDU https://www.lendedu.com/student-loans-debt-by-school-by-date/2020-rank QC’s 26th nationally and fourth in New York City in terms of the comparatively low debt burdens carried by students in the class of 2019, with an average debt per borrower of $14,738. QC also made Money’s annual Best Colleges list https://money.com/best-colleges/
Watson Fellows Sprung into Action

Three QC undergraduates won Jeanette K. Watson Fellowships this spring and were placed in remote internships corresponding to their interests. Yvonne Scoica, a climate activist, worked in food safety with the Pittsburgh Department of Planning. Christy Suquitana, who has a deep commitment to justice, inclusion, and cultural exchange, was assigned to the English language learning program We Speak NYC, run by the NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. Rene Yaroshevsky, a leader in the Model United Nations Organization, was involved with research at the West Africa Centre for Counter-Extremism, based in Accra, Ghana.

Godwin-Ternbach Prevails in Virtual Challenge from Upstate

Facing a MuseumFromHomeChallenge from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, QC’s Godwin-Ternbach came out on top. In a contest held on Twitter from April 10 at noon to 11 am the next morning, each museum posted an image of an item in its collection and asked followers to vote for their favorite. The GTM’s Huiru Mummy Bundle Mask outpolled Albright- Knox’s entry, Constantino Brancaccio’s “Madonnasemig Lapis Lil.”

“Many museums and cultural institutions have been grappling with how to connect with audiences while we social distance from home,” said Maria Pio, co-director of the Godwin-Ternbach. “Hashtags like #MuseumFromHome and #CultureFromHome have been used to describe various experiences audiences can have while museums have their doors closed.” The Albright-Knox started doing friendly institutional match-ups with GTM as early as six years ago with a similar program inspired by the NCAA’s March Madness.

“We hope that by participating in the MuseumFromHomeChallenge, audiences who were not previously familiar with the GTM got a little glimpse into our collection,” added Pio, who encourages art lovers to follow the museum on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. “We also have been posting weekly, highlighting objects from GTM and engaging audiences the best we can from home.”

Calling an End to Divisions on Campus

Over the past year, QC replaced its divisional nomenclature with a school structure, in keeping with widespread practice at institutions of higher education. The college’s academic organization remains the same—departments are grouped as previously under Arts and Humanities, Education, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. Aaron Copland School of Music, the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, and the School of Earth and Environmental Studies are schools within their respective schools.

Deanship Developments

Over the summer, a national search concluded in the appointment of Daniel Weinstein as dean of the School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Weinstein had been serving as interim since fall 2019; previously he chaired the biology department.

Dana Fusco was named interim dean of the School of Education. Fusco came to QC after more than 20 years as a professor of education and youth studies at CUNY’s York College. As chair of teacher education—a title she held from 2014—she led York to a successful CAEP Accreditation and created several student-focused initiatives to improve retention and completion rates. She succeeds Craig Michaels, who will rejoin the faculty of Education and Community Programs after taking a sabbatical this fall.

Serving Students and the Community

While pivoting to remote operations (see page 24), QC joined the battle against the coronavirus pandemic and the hardship it has caused.

The college’s School of Mathematics and Sciences donated a large quantity of N-95 masks, gloves, lab coats and isopropyl alcohol to city health care workers on Sunday, March 22. Professors, faculty and college lab technicians searched their teaching labs for equipment and supplies after urgent requests from Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio for medical supplies to fight COVID-19. Materials were picked up by New York City Emergency Management for distribution; WPIX11, WINS, and Queens Chronicle, among other outlets, covered the effort.

The Knights Table, Queens College’s food pantry, began offering pre-plated meals at least once a week not only to QC students, but also to students at any CUNY school. (View, the college’s electronic newsletter, regularly provided links to New York City’s free food hubs, as well as other operations that give away food to people in need. The Tech Incubator released an upgraded version of the Hungry4Halal app built and launched by students in 2018. Hungry4Halal Ramadan enabled users to find locations that distributed halal food for free. The app is free and can be downloaded at the Apple (iOS App Store). Recognizing the tremendous economic damage wreaked by COVID-19, the Tech Incubator partnered with the Small Business Administration and the LaGuardia Community College Small Business Development Center to present programs for small companies and nonprofits affected by the coronavirus.

QC’s highly successful distance learning model received close-up coverage on August 3, 2020, when the CBS show “Sunday Morning” ran a feature on higher education during a pandemic. Jill Schlesinger, a business analyst with CBS News, interviewed QC President Frank W. Wu, graduate student and former Student Association President Carmine Couloute, and rising sophomore Shalubo Kastenbaum. Observing that studying online enables her to advance her education while holding down two jobs and engaging in activism, Couloute described the campus as “empty, serene, beautiful, but ready to be packed again in the future.”

QC Team Triumphs in Cybersecurity Competition

Each of them received $600 and a diploma recognizing their achievement. Balram founded QC’s ISACA IT Audit & Cybersecurity Club, which invited students of all majors to enter the contest.

Finishing fourth, just out of the money, was FB Consultants, comprising Nathaniel Samuels and Joshua Hwang, undergraduate accounting majors; Mathew Panzenbeck, a math major; and Moses Parato and Peter Sideris, computer science majors. The judges congratulated both teams on the quality of their analysis and the answers they provided in the interview portion of the competition.

“Special thanks and mention should go to the mentors for the two QC teams,” said Steven Solfieri (Accounting and Information Systems), faculty advisor of the ISACA club, who arranged for the students to prepare for the contest by working with Walter Cook and Brian Moler of D3 Intelligence, and Mark Northrup, associate partner of Digital Energy & Utilities at IBM.

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“These poignant stories are powerful because they are so honest,” says Randolph Philipp, professor of Mathematics Education at San Diego State University School of Teacher Education and immediate past president of the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators. “I wish I’d read these stories before I experienced some of the joys and challenges of my early years of teaching because they would have prepared me for the roller coaster of emotion associated with entering this complex but beautiful profession. I think these stories will be helpful when working with prospective and early career teachers.”

Sir Paul Toots Satchmo’s Horn and Other News from LAHM

After borrowing one of Satchmo’s trumpets from the Louis Armstrong House Museum (LAHM), Paul McCartney joined the Preservation Hall Jazz Band remotely in a rendition of “When the Saints Go Marching In.” The New Orleans standard was the closing number in a June 22 fundraiser for the Preservation Hall Foundation’s Legacy Relief Fund, created to help musicians who are underemployed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Keeping in tune with the times, LAHM opened itself to armchair tourism with That’s My Home, an online exhibition curated by Research Collections Director Ricky Riccardi. The exhibition enables jazz fans from all over the world to explore museum holdings at their own pace. Newly accessible materials range from vintage film clips and photographs to conversations and practice sessions Armstrong taped on his reel-to-reel recorder. That’s My Home received enthusiastic coverage in New York area outlets, in the Washington Post, and even the London Times.

On the evening of September 17, under the leadership of newly named Executive Director Regina Bain, LAHM held a virtual gala. The lineup starred Riccardi, who made a presentation on Armstrong’s social activism, as well as jazz artists Wynton Marsalis and Jason Moran.

Quantifying the College’s Impact

QC doesn’t merely change students’ lives; it boosts the overall economy of metropolitan New York by $1.8 billion. That’s the conclusion of an economic impact study conducted by labor analytics firm Emsi and released in February 2020. Expressed another way, there’s an impressive $4.82 return for every tax dollar spent on the college. Working with data from fiscal year 2017-2018, Emsi credits most of the college’s economic impact to alumni, who—thanks to their education—lead longer, healthier, and more productive lives and generate about 83 percent, or $1.5 billion, of the figure attributed to QC. The complete report and summaries of it are posted to the Queens College website at https://www.qc.cuny.edu/about/ MajorReport/Reports/Economic_Impact_Analysis.aspx.
**Clare Shulman, 1926–2020**

The entire Queens College community mourned the loss of former Queens Borough President Clare Shulman, who died on Sunday, August 16, at the age of 94.

A passionate and persistent supporter of all the colleges in Queens, Shulman advocated particularly strongly for CUNY campuses. After all, she began her higher education within CUNY—at Brooklyn College—before transferring to Adelphi. She would meet with college presidents individually, learn their campus priorities, and advocate at the highest city and state levels for capital and operational funding. Her phone calls to government officials were legendary; she wouldn’t take no for an answer.

Health care was another one of Shulman’s top priorities. A registered nurse who worked at Queens Hospital Center, she worked vigorously within the county to create linkages between colleges and hospitals and bring students into the allied health sciences.

Shulman was predeceased by her husband Melvin Shulman, a psychiatrist and World War II and Korean War veteran, and their son Kim, an assistant director in the film and television industry. She is survived by her daughter, astronaut Ellen Baker, her son Lawrence Shulman, an oncologist, and their families.

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**Athletics Holds Virtual Fitness Classes**

Looking for a low-cost way to stay in shape? Get moving online with guidance from the QC Athletics Department. Fitness and recreation staff are leading virtual sessions five days a week (Monday through Friday), with five classes on Zoom and pre-recorded instructional videos on QC Athletics’ YouTube channel (QCKnights). Classes include a variety of workouts such as cardio, yoga, high-intensity interval training (HIIT), strength training, stretching, and recovery, as well as nutrition.

“Due to COVID and classes being online, we were thinking outside of the box on ways to serve our students,” said Director of Athletics and Recreation Rob Twible. “Without being open, we had to come up with some new ideas.”

QC Athletics has also started a running club. To join, download the Nike Run Club app on your phone (available for iOS and Android). Then go visit the Runner’s Club page on QC Athletics’ website for further instructions. With the Run Club app, participants can track progress, take part in challenges, compare and compete with friends, and encourage each other to stay motivated.

“We will track mileage and have a leaderboard [on the Run Club App]. We hope that will get some people’s competitive juices flowing,” added Twible.

For the class schedule and Zoom access information, go to www.queensknights.com/recreationfitness. For any additional questions on virtual fitness, please email Jason Possler at jason.posser@qc.cuny.edu.

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**From QC to a Career**

How an internship at Schneps Media worked to advance Toni Cimino ’03

In 2014, Cimino left for a position with the New York Family for Autism Children, an agency that serves adults and children with autism and other developmental disabilities. “I knew its president through the Queens Courier,” she explains, referring to a Schneps paper, now part of QNS.com. Cimino’s experience at NYFAC, which involved grant writing, gave her insight into the nonprofit world.

After two years at NYFAC, she returned to Schneps’ Bayside headquarters in a new capacity: director of corporate events. “It was like going home,” says Cimino. “Everyone was familiar to me. It was an easy commute from Nassau County; where I live.” Apart from the fact that all the events she has been planning are now virtual, her job hasn’t changed much in response to the coronavirus pandemic. “I prefer going to the office,” she notes. On the side, she teaches Zumba.

“Seeing her work ethic is what made me decide that when an opening occurred in our newsroom, she’d be the first one I consider for hiring.”

—Vicki Schneps, publisher and president of Schneps Media

Toni Cimino might have been expected to gravitate toward the health care field. Her mother is a microbiologist and phlebotomist; her sister is a medical biller studying to be a doctor. But Cimino was more interested in journalism. “I watched Barbara Walters and ’20/20’ as a kid,” she recalls. So at Queens College—which she chose for its excellent programs and its accessibility to her Bayside home—she focused on English and business courses.

Although she was juggling her studies with a full-time job teaching pre-kindergarten at a private school, she jumped at the opportunity to take an unpaid internship at Schneps Media, a company that produces newspapers, magazines, specialty publications, websites, and annual events. That internship led to employment at Schneps, where Cimino has been a staffer for a total of 17 years.

“It was a very impressive internship, having Toni work side-by-side with my editorial team,” says Vicki Schneps, publisher and president of her eponymous company. “She was the first one in and the last one to leave. There was no assignment that she didn’t do and complete! Seeing her work ethic is what made me decide that when an opening occurred in our newsroom, she’d be the first one I consider for hiring.”

“Being an intern means hard work. For Toni, it meant being one of the last ones to leave. There was always more to do.”

—Carol Schneps, publisher and president of Schneps Media

“Seeing her work ethic is what made me decide that when an opening occurred in our newsroom, she’d be the first one I consider for hiring.”

—Vicki Schneps, publisher and president of Schneps Media

“Seeing her work ethic is what made me decide that when an opening occurred in our newsroom, she’d be the first one I consider for hiring.”

—Vicki Schneps, publisher and president of Schneps Media
Like generations of Queens College students, you come from an immigrant family. Where did your parents come from? What brought them to the United States? Why did they stay?

My parents were born in China and grew up in Taiwan. They came to the United States—where they met—in the early 1960s to go to graduate school. My father earned a doctorate as a mechanical engineer; my mother earned a master’s degree in library science.

My father told me that when he was growing up, at dinner you’d have a bowl of rice, a stalk of vegetable, and meat as a condiment. Usually you’d have tofu, once a week, you’d have a little meat. He didn’t go hungry at night, but the portions were meager. He came to the United States and realized that without being wealthy, he could go out and eat an eight-ounce steak once a month. That was unimaginable where he had come from. So, there was no doubt that if you had the opportunity to study in the United States, you had to seize that opportunity.

My father got a job with Ford Motor Company. At that time, to work at Ford was the best job you could have. The auto industry represented American might; it was the Silicon Valley of its era. You could expect to have your job at Ford for life.

Where did you grow up? How was your childhood affected by the fact that you’re a first-generation Asian American?

I grew up in the Detroit suburbs in the 1970s. We were the only Oriental family in the neighborhood—that term was still in use then, suggesting that we belonged halfway around the world. I’m ashamed to admit it, but I was embarrassed of my parents. Every kid is embarrassed of their parents at some point. But when you’re the child of newcomers, the embarrassment is more acute, because you’re aware that you’re different. In the Midwest, you had to fit in. You’d be teased and taunted and subject to the common cruelty of the playground: being asked if I ate dogs, if my parents were Communists, if I could see with eyes like that.

My mother spent every afternoon cooking. She would make a steamed whole fish with its head and tail still on, just like her mother had made. My brothers and I would turn our noses up at it and demand what neighbor kids were eating: hamburgers and hot dogs, pizza and meat loaf and spaghetti. My mother sent us to school with a thermos with fried rice and chopsticks. During lunch hour, people would always look at what I had packed and say, “Eww, what’s that?”

My parents spoke to my brothers and me in Chinese and we spoke to them in English. So, my brothers and I spoke a language that to my parents was a foreign language, and vice versa. Whenever I visited China, I realize my mother was right: I should have paid attention in Chinese school.

My parents always wanted me to do extra math homework and play the piano. I just wanted to be a kid and ride my bicycle around the block and hang out. My parents wanted my brothers and me to study a STEM field. They didn’t understand liberal arts; they thought you couldn’t possibly have a job if you were a liberal arts major. The very same arguments that I had in the 1980s, our students have with their immigrant parents and grandparents. I’m sympathetic to both sides.

What was school like for you?

I had skipped a grade and was born in late August, just before the school year started, so I was two years younger than everyone else. I had attention deficit disorder. I don’t mean that just as hyperbole; I was diagnosed.

In junior high, I was inattentive and a bad student, but I knew all the material. My social science teacher persuaded the principal to buy me a fetal pig to dissect, so I wouldn’t disrupt the rest of the class. I was in this little room breathing in formaldehyde while the class read Grapes of Wrath. I had finished the book already. But I have realized it’s better to be accurate than fast.
Another issue is that I stuttered. Even now, people don’t quite understand how to cure stuttering. Back then, speech therapists thought that giving speeches was a way to fix that problem. So, I gave speeches and took part in debates—forensics, it was called. I did that in junior high and high school and was a collegiate debater. I am a classic underachiever. It wasn’t until law school that I was challenged.

What inspired you to become a lawyer?
As a teenager, I was very much affected by the murder of Vincent Chin, an infamous hate crime before hate crime was even accepted as a concept. Two white autoworkers—a man and his stepson—bludgeoned Chin to death in Detroit in 1982 at his bachelor party. In the 1970s and ’80s, Japanese cars had started to take market share from American automakers. Chin’s killers saw him as a stand-in for Toyota and Toyota. One of the men said, “It was because of you little Japanese that we’re out of work.” Chin was Chinese, not Japanese; a U.S. citizen, not a foreigner. Of course, it wouldn’t have been right if they had found a Japanese foreign national and killed him.

At their trial, the assailants admitted killing Chin, saying it was a bar brawl that got out of hand. The judge sentenced them to probation for three years and a fine of $3,000 each. Then you saw something that world had never seen before: angry Asian Americans marching and protesting. The case brought together people of Japanese and Chinese descent. The local NAACP chapter, the largest in America, joined in the protest. There were Jewish groups and Catholic groups. This case made me see the power of words: just fighting words, ugly racial slurs, but also the ability people have to reach out and persuade people who don’t look like them that something is wrong. You don’t have to be Chinese American or Japanese American to say that it’s not right to bludgeon someone who doesn’t look like you to death with a baseball bat, but admit it, and not go to prison.

What prompted you to move into legal education?
I practiced law for two years in San Francisco. I wanted to change the world and I still do. But I found that the better lawyer I was, the worse human being I was. Some people can compartmentalize. When you’re a lawyer, typically you’re ruminating your brain. You’re putting your skills to work for your client, not a cause. At some point I decided I didn’t want to do that anymore. I’m glad I practiced law. It made me a better thinker. I train people for a profession I left, knowing that some would do exactly what I did and some would be on the opposite side of the sorts of cases I was on. I don’t judge people who decide to do that.

As a faculty member or board member, you’ve worked with a broad range of institutions, such as Howard University and Gallaudet University. What did you learn from them?
I went to historically Black Howard University because I believe in civil rights and bridge building. My experience as the first Asian I went to historically Black Howard University because I believe in civil rights and bridge building. My experience as the first Asian I went to historically Black Howard University because I believe in civil rights and bridge building. My experience as the first Asian I went to historically Black Howard University because I believe in civil rights and bridge building. My experience as the first Asian I went to historically Black Howard University because I believe in civil rights and bridge building. My experience as the first Asian. At Howard I was an underachiever—one of a kind. That set me on a path. Every time I stepped on the campus of Gallaudet University, I realized I was disabled. I’m not fluent in American sign language. The interpreters were there to help me! Everyone else was perfectly capable of carrying on casual conversation or discussion of academics or business in sign language or bilingually. I could only follow along with an interpreter. Seeing the legendary president there, I, King Jordan, who served for 18 years, do that. I realized you could do something institutionally to change so many lives. I’d like to try to do that.

Why did you want to lead Queens College?
I had previously been dean and chancellor of Hastings Law School at the University of California. I was dean of the law school and chancellor of the campus. University of California uses the opposite naming that CUNY does—you have a president of the whole system and chancellor at each campus. UC Hastings has its own board, so I didn’t report to a president.

Since I’d already headed a campus, I wasn’t interested in pursuing something like that generically. I pursued the opportunity at Queens College because of its diversity. One of the great aspects of Queens College and Queens as a borough is that you can still maintain your heritage—this sense of identity can flourish in a way that just isn’t supported in other places. What attracted me wasn’t the goal of being a college president, but being the Queens College president.

When did you take up running, and why?
My cousin came to visit in 2013 with her then-husband, who was going to run the San Francisco marathon. He said, “If I can do it, you can do it.” So, I signed up for a half-marathon. I finished it in just under three hours—not a good time. I was stiff and sore for the next three days, but I was hooked. I just became part of who I was. Once I started being a runner, it became the best part of my day, something that clears your head, gets the blood flowing. I’m not very fast, but I’m quite persistent.

Before the pandemic, I was running a half-marathon at least every other week.

Have you asked about your motorcycle.
When did you start riding one, and why?
Where in Queens do you hope to ride?
When I was a teenager, our next-door neighbor had a motorcycle. Of course, I wanted one. My parents were rational human beings and they said no, you may not have one. When I was an adult I went out and bought a motorcycle. I haven’t ridden much in the past two decades because I had a rare, serious autoimmune disease—pemphigus vulgaris, now in remission—and couldn’t ride.

I want to explore every part of Queens by riding a motorcycle, by running, by mass transit once it’s safe, by every means possible. I want to see the borough and walk around. I believe in cities, I believe in public transportation, I believe in public education—that’s what I’m about.
Katz Family

Barry Katz ’73 is a proud alumnus of Queens College who serves on the Business Advisory Board. Ask him why he’s so invested in the college and it quickly becomes clear that, for him, it represents family, community, and professional fulfillment.

Katz’s more than 40 years of experience in the broadcast and cable television industry span promotion, sales, production, management, and the creative side. He is senior vice president and general manager of NEP Studios, as he describes as “the largest provider of broadcast services in the world”—the company assists shows and networks with studio space, technical equipment, lighting, even production staff. His clients range from “The Daily Show with Trevor Noah” to “Chopped,” and include a steady clientele of sports and award shows. “Over the years I’ve had the good fortune of meeting President Bill Clinton, Paul McCartney, Walter Cronkite. There is fun to this business,” says Katz. “And it’s exciting to shake hands with a president.”

At QC, he double-majoried in communications and political science, with an eye to pursuing his concerned parents who urged him to go to law school. “I even took the LSAT, but I told them, I don’t want to be a lawyer. That doesn’t fit with my personality.” He wanted to be in the television industry. “Just energized me,” recalls Katz. While in school, he became a DJ with his own two-hour music show on WQMC, the college radio station. He got his first on-air role by reading the news for legendary sportscaster Howie Rose ’77, where they grew up. As a senior, he also secured a coveted job as a part-time page at ABC. “Queens College gave me that opportunity,” he says. “I could go to school and still be a page because it was part-time page at ABC. The baton later passed to the younger generation: Barry and Marilyn’s daughter Amy Katz ’17 completed her MSEd at Queens College, while their older daughter Lisa brought talented singer Gilad Paz ’11 into the family by marrying him. (Proving that the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree, Amy married Gabe Himner, a broadcasting professional.)

Katz is an engaged advisor to the college, but what he most relishes is the chance to meet and help students. Working in an industry where freedom is common, he is keenly aware of students’ many economic struggles and the pressure on them to find lucrative careers. Yet he has advised young students not to be too quick to follow what may only look like a safe path. “I told one young woman studying accounting when she really wanted to be a teacher, ‘If this isn’t what you love, you may not be as successful as you would be in another field where you’re really doing what you enjoy.’

Katz confesses that he never would have guessed 40 years ago that he would end up in the position he holds today. “Both Marilyn and I feel you have to give back, you have to pay it forward. We owe so much to Queens College. We met at Queens College. Our careers were built because of the education we got at Queens College.”

He takes pride in being a lifelong New Yorker. “Our parents lived here. As they got older, we had a responsibility to take care of them. It’s generations: It was important to our families—to my mother, Marilyn’s mother, to our kids—to stay rooted in New York and support one another. If we can help students get jobs and stay in the New York area, it’s self-perpetuating.”

—Jacquelyn Southern

Zita Dresner and Her Mother, Violet Zatkin

There have been some unexpected silver linings to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Zita Dresner ’61 experienced one. With the Aaron Copland School of Music’s graduation ceremony forced to take place entirely online, Dresner, who lives in Lewes, Delaware, had the opportunity to watch.

“It’s the first time that I’ve ever seen my parents’ scholarship being awarded to somebody,” she says. “It was a thrill for me, and it was for Howie, to see my parents’ scholarship given out.”

Dresner grew up in Forest Hills, which was conveniently close to her parents’ home. From her first visit, she learned that the center was in desperate need of voicesandmore.com/work#/zita-dresner/ her expertise, talent, and enthusiasm to worthy organizations that would significantly expand the breadth of the center’s offerings.

In 2007, Dresner retired and moved to Delaware. She pursues her interest in issues pertaining to the elderly by volunteering for the Elder Law Program of the Community Legal Aid Society of Delaware.

“What I mostly do for them is wills, powers of attorney, and health care directives,” she says. “Of course, I haven’t been able to do much because they’ve had to be signed and witnessed and notarized and our offices are closed because of COVID-19.” She was, however, able to participate in one hearing concerning an assisted living facility that was trying to get rid of a resident: “We did a Zoom hearing and got the notice dismissed.” She also volunteers with the Community Resource Center, a group in Rehoboth, Delaware, that helps people with issues related to rent, utilities, and other expenses, and is a member of the legislative committee of the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice.

In 2018, Dresner returned to DC to attend a retrospective at the American University Museum of works by artists who had been affiliated with the Washington Women’s Art Center, an organization that was an important part of her early years in the DC area. From 1975 to 1987, the nonprofit provided professional support and opportunities for local women in the arts.

A video in which Dresner describes her time at the center was shown at the exhibition and can be found online at https:// voicesandmore.com/work#/zita-dresner/ In it she recalls how upon her first visit, she learned that the center was in desperate need of money. With no previous experience, she took on the task of writing the center’s first grant, which was awarded and led to other grants that would significantly expand the breadth of the center’s offerings.

You could say her success at the center augmented the experiences she would continue to have in close to five decades of volunteerizing her expertise, talent, and enthusiasm to worthy organizations that have greatly benefited from her interest.

—Bob Suter

More QC Legacies

The third installment of a regular feature on families with a proud history of studying at Queens College

QUEENS: The Magazine of Queens College 19
None of us could have imagined how our lives would change this year. The global pandemic has impacted every individual and family in such a profound way. Your Queens College family is no exception.

For the last 40 years, the Queens College Foundation, through your charitable donations, has offered substantial scholarship support to talented students and has provided funds to enrich the fine programs and offerings at QC. To counter the impact of the pandemic, the Queens College Foundation established a Critical Needs Fund. The fund is helping to support the entire college community through this crisis and beyond by ensuring that the integrity of our programs, the breadth of our offerings, and the many student resources typically available on campus continue to thrive during this critical moment in history and for many years to come.

At this challenging time, we respectfully ask every member of our Queens College family to consider contributing to the Critical Needs Fund to the best of their ability. Queens College needs you now more than ever!

If you wish to make your donation online, please visit www.qcdonates.com/CNF or text your pledge to 646-846-5420.

Queens College, in conjunction with the East Coast Conference, made the extremely difficult decision to postpone all intercollegiate athletics competition for the Fall 2020 semester due to health and safety concerns stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Two of our student-athletes reflect on their challenges during this time and how they are more ready than ever to get back in the game.

What I Know Now

Dani D’Angelo ’21
You truly don’t appreciate this sport until it’s out of your hands. The sport where you stay committed and dedicated until your hard work shows. The ambition to take those extra swings off the tee, have non-stop balls drilled at you, constantly throwing a pitch until it hits the right spot. It’s a sport of putting in extra work in order to achieve your goals. Softball is a rollercoaster . . . . it’s a game of failure and success. From the highest point of success to the lowest point of a slump. You have to fight for the wins and take the losses as a learning experience.

Putting your heart and all into the game is what bonds the team to be a family. It’s not an individual sport, it’s a team sport. You work your hardest to impact the success of the team. When sitting back thinking at this time, you realize how much it is dearly missed. The appreciation can get lost in the mix of the moments during the season. The memories cherished during that time don’t seem so influential till it’s over.

Making up cheers as a team, doing handshakes during the game, singing songs to and from games are all the little things that bring us together. Those are the sounds that thrill excitement. It’s an honor to share this game with people all over the world. Make each time you step on the field count because one day these will be the “good old days.”

David Grady III ’22
Dear Basketball
We miss you

For one, this entire year has been weird. With the deaths of heroes and the introduction of a new unexplainable virus. The world is in a fragile state and in a sort of limbo. In the midst of that confusion and of these dire times, you’ve been taken away from the ones that love you and which has hit just as hard. From the high school games, to the NCAA, all the way up to the NBA. You stretch your arms around the world and squeeze it with an amazing energy.

As a result, some of us may take you for granted and not realize just how special you truly are. You give people opportunity. A hope that is unmatched. You are global peace. You create families between complete strangers. You make friendships that can last a lifetime. You motivate the masses creating the greatest stories of triumph and overcoming the odds. Basketball you are the rival of a pandemic. The greatest fear of social distancing because you are what brings the most unlikely of people together.

Basketball you are my greatest friend and I can’t wait ‘til we meet again.

Yours truly,
The people
Each academic year, the Office of Institutional Advancement brings Queens College students and distinguished alumni and friends together through a special lecture series called Professionals on/off Campus. Hosted on campus, online, or off campus at alumni offices, these events provide students with the opportunity to learn from and interact with seasoned professionals representing multiple industries and sectors. Our renowned speakers are considered experts in their fields and role models for career success. Notably, most got their start at Queens College.

Professionals on/off Campus is proud to recognize the exceptional speakers for the 2019–2020 academic year.

Kim Bodden ’81 | Senior Vice President and Editorial and Brand Director, Hearst Magazines International

Judi Bosworth ’68 | Town Supervisor, Town of North Hempstead

Ellis Ende ’76 | CPA and Managing Partner, Raich Ende Malter and Company LLP

Michael Feldman ’66 | Arbitrator, Former Partner, Proskauer Rose LLP

Daniel Fromm ’04 | Senior Managing Director, Newmark Knight Frank

Gary Garson ’67 | Former General Counsel, Loews Corporation

Reri Grist ’54 | Teacher; Retired Concert and Operatic Singer

Amber Guth ’79 | Specialist in Surgical Oncology and Breast Surgery, NYU Langone Health

Barbara Hochhauser ’65 | Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker and Senior Global Advisor, The Corcoran Group

Gary Katz ’81 | Former President and Chief Executive Officer, International Securities Exchange

Andrew Kimler ’74 | Partner, Vishnick McGovern Milizio LLP

Susheel Kirpalani ’91 | Partner, Quinn Emanuel Urquhart and Sullivan, LLP

Joseph Milizio | Managing Partner, Vishnick McGovern Milizio LLP

Michael Minikes ’65 | Managing Director and Vice Chairman of Prime Brokerage, J.P. Morgan

Mary Murphy ’81 | Journalist, CW11/WPIX-TV

Christopher Porter | Partner, Quinn Emanuel Urquhart and Sullivan, LLP

John Roche ’84 | Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, ShopOne Centers REIT

David Rosen ’80 | Chief Executive Officer, Dash Pharmaceuticals LLC

Howard Sipzner ’83 | Managing Member and Founder, Dunes Capital LLC

Joseph Trotti ’80 | Partner, Vishnick McGovern Milizio LLP
LEARNING A NEW WAY TO TEACH

The COVID-19 crisis required CTL to rethink its strategy for helping faculty members move courses online—a tall order, given instructors’ differing levels of proficiency with digital tools, as well as varied access to devices and the Internet. CTL created and presented live workshops and set up a Keep Teaching website with tutorials, recorded workshops, and collections of helpful resources. One-on-one assistance was available through email, video conferencing, online drop-in hours, and phone.

“The level of support CTL has been able to provide is due to the collaborative efforts of our entire team,” said Michelle Fraiboni, CTL director. “Encouraging community exchange among the faculty, and a commitment to the wide-ranging needs of the students, is a priority for us.”

Fraiboni, CTL Associate Director Nathalia Hofmann, and the center’s three full-time instructional technologists—Jean Kelly, Rachel Stem, and Rob Garfield—were all instrumental in providing the needed support, as were part-time CTL tech mentors and members of the HSI-STEM Bridges Across Eastern Queens team (directed by Associate Provost for Innovation and Student Success Eva Fernández).

Drawing on digital skills acquired through CTL, Saima Chema (Biology) prepared two lab courses to go fully online, using Blackboard to collect and grade assignments, and Google Meet and Screencast-O-Matic for video lectures. Because she could not expect students to perform demonstrations at home, she developed a rigorous combination of virtual demonstrations, simulated lab results, and analytical exercises for them to work through instead. “This replaced some hands-on activity, but it’s really walking students through every step from prep to the end,” explained Chema, who trained her lab instructors for online teaching and recruited them to help her quickly track down the best available digital lab resources.

Leawood Gibson (ECP) had already incorporated different technologies—Blackboard, Google Meet, Zoom, even an interactive app called Nearpod—into his in-person graduate courses. Consequently, Gibson was able to build on his knowledge base, some of which gleaned from students. “I’ve learned from them over the years about things that might work better than what I’m trying,” he observed.

Vanessa Perez (Political Science) redesigned a hybrid and a traditional undergraduate course of her own. Then, responding to CTL’s call for help, she consulted over the phone and created video tutorials and written guides. Her efforts included “How to Transition Your In-Person Class to Online during a Pandemic in 24 Hours or Less,” a crash course that was attended by faculty from QC and across CUNY. To accommodate students who might not have computers or internet access, she devised assignments that students could complete on their phones, using the Blackboard app. As a backup, Perez said, “We can email the lecture and the assignment, and worst-case scenario, use the mail.”

Providing Student Support

Although physically closed, the Academic Advising Center has maintained its regular hours, which include evening and Saturday availability. Advisors have been using CUNYfirst, DegreeWorks, and Navigate—a new technological tool that facilitates communication with students—to provide advising services via phone, email, and video-conferencing platforms. “Words cannot describe my level of gratitude and appreciation to the AAC team as we navigate (no pun intended—really!) these uncertain times that are affecting all aspects of our lives,” said Academic Advising Director Laura Silverman.

Similarly, OSS ramped up efforts to ensure that all QC students with disabilities can learn effectively with the shift to remote learning. Staff has been working with professors to help them understand and use the available systems and apps. Special software is available to students who need it to be successful in their classes. “The Office of Special Services has stepped up to address our students’ needs remotely,” said Mirian Dette-Hickey, OSS director. “We are fortunate to have staff that is dedicated and willing to go the extra mile.”

Library faculty and staff began working remotely, too. They field questions via email and chat, upload and check new electronic resources, and share news through social media and updates to the library website. “The good news is that more reference materials are available around the clock. Help is available seven days a week. It’s also possible to make an appointment for one-on-one help with a subject specialist or connect to the library’s chat service, with a nationwide network of librarians available around the clock.”

Going Online for Class

Adjusting rapidly to all online classes, students tackled issues that ranged from learning to use unfamiliar course software to the more layered context of trying to live, work, and study when ordinary life has been upended. Many students were inexperienced with the course platforms. Others were stressed by distance education itself. “Not everyone focuses well at home,” observed Briana Galimi ’19, a master’s candidate in counseling in the ECP program. “People definitely do prefer being at school and able to go study elsewhere.”

Time management is an additional challenge. Accustomed to scheduled classes, students have to juggle synchronous and asynchronous classes, new syllabi, and new deadlines. “It can be so easy to get lost between email and what’s going on in Blackboard and Google Classroom and Zoom,” said Student Association President Zaire Couloute. Her strategy is to view uploaded lectures when her class was originally scheduled “so I don’t get confused about what my class is doing.”

Schedules can be harder to rearrange if students hold jobs. “A lot of students are essential workers,” reported Joseph Cobraume, SEEK student and former SA president. “My dad owns his own taxi service, so I work under him. I have to go out in the morning and drive my car.” Another complication is that he’s a member of a large household in which everyone is on the Internet, slowing down the system.

As members of a diverse community, QC students are aware of the big picture. Galimi thinks the pandemic is giving people an opportunity for reflection. “When this first happened, everyone kind of wished, ‘Oh, I don’t want to go to work and school,’ with very negative attributions to schoolwork and other responsibilities,” she said. “Now, when everyone’s forced to be home and not work and not go to school, I’ve seen a huge shift in motivation, the way that people view life—in a positive way.”

Achiving Virtual Success

QC Makes a Rapid Shift to Remote Operations

By John Scarcini and Jacqueyln Southern

The spring semester was well under way when Queens College—like the rest of CUNY—responded to the coronavirus pandemic by moving to distance learning. Faculty adapted courses with the help of colleagues and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The Academic Advising Center and the Office of Special Services (OSS) continued to support students, librarians offered extensive services. Students attended classes via interactive electronic platforms. This collective transition established a model as the college maintained remote operations in summer and fall 2020.
Four Alumni Get on Board

The Queens College Foundation is delighted to announce its newest members: Donald Brownstein ’65, Jamie Klein ’79, Max Rodriguez ’07, and David Weiner ’76.

Donald Brownstein ’65

Brownstein is executive chairman of Structured Portfolio Management, which he founded in 1997. Previously, he managed CDC Servicing, Inc., a specialized investment subsidiary of the Caisse des Depots et Consignations, and worked in portfolio management at Franklin Savings Association, a leader in the development of quantitative methods for the management of mortgage-backed securities. For the first 20 years of his career, Brownstein was a professor in the philosophy departments of the University of Kansas and the University of Texas. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Minnesota, a BA from Queens College, and was a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of Language and Information at Stanford University.

Jamie Klein ’79

Klein retired from KPMG in 2018 after more than three decades at the company. For the last 27 years, she has served as an audit partner across a wide range of sectors, working with private and public businesses as well as not-for-profit organizations. Her clients have included Bloomberg Philanthropies Health Management Systems, Infinity Broadcasting Corporation, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the New York Public Library. Klein has held leadership roles with the Dalton School, Harlem School of the Arts, and KPMG initiatives, including its New York Fund, its Partnership Council, and the New York Chapter of its Network of Women. She has been honored by INCLUDEnyc and the American Jewish Congress, and was inducted into the YWCA’s Academy of Women Achievers. She graduated magna cum laude from Queens College with a BA in Accounting and Economics.

Max Rodriguez ’07

Rodriguez is the program manager for Deloitte’s Global Tax and Legal Communications team, supporting internal communications for senior leadership. Earlier in his career, Rodriguez worked as the public outreach coordinator for the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law and the technology and communications coordinator for the Campaign for Better Health Care. He completed an MA in Communication from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a BA in Media Studies and a minor in Business and Liberal Arts from Queens College, where he was the general manager of WQMC Queens College Radio and managing editor of the Knight News.

David Weiner ’76

Weiner is a managing director and senior portfolio manager at employee-owned asset manager Neuberger Berman, which he joined in 1994 after working at EM Warburg Pincus & Co., Draelof Asset Management, and First Manhattan Company. A general partner at Neuberger for 24 years, he invests several billion dollars for individuals and institutional clients, primarily in domestic equities, as part of a group that includes Marvin and Charlie Schwartz, Richard and Taylor Glasebrook, and Queens College alumna and Queens College Foundation trustee Stephanie Stiefel. Weiner graduated from Queens College with a BA in Economics and attended the Columbia University Business School. He is a trustee of the Jewish Foundation for the Education of Women (JFEW), which provides educational grants to help women attend college. JFEW also funds programming at Queens College.

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Lenwood Gibson, associate professor and the program coordinator of the Graduate Programs in Special Education in the School of Education, meets with students to discuss issues in special education today.

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www.qc.cuny.edu/exploregrad
QC hits a home run thanks to the generosity of Fred and Judy Wilpon

“We are very grateful for the generosity of Fred and Judy Wilpon,” says Laurie Dorf, Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations. “Our first generation students will truly benefit from their philanthropy.”

The Wilpons launched the program 12 years ago at their alma mater, the University of Michigan. The positive outcomes, including a four-year graduation rate of 81% amongst Kessler Scholars, have paved the way for the program’s expansion. Queens College joins a select group of prestigious schools – Johns Hopkins University, St. Francis College; Syracuse University, Cornell University and the University of Michigan – that are home to the Kessler Scholars Program. Collectively, the schools form the Kessler Scholars Collaborative, a one-of-a-kind partnership for the support of first-generation students.

The Kessler Scholars Program is about much more than just funding—it is about transforming the first-generation experience. The program places significant priority on building a community for student success. Students participate in peer mentoring programs, unique service and leadership initiatives, as well as professional development and internship opportunities. Students are part of small, discussion-based classes with dedicated faculty and guidance from professional program directors.

As a former first-generation student himself, Fred Wilpon understands the impact a strong support system can have. The transition from high school to college is a monumental shift and not having the familial experience to lean on for guidance can be overwhelming. “By building community and connecting students with one another and with staff dedicated to their success, students in the Kessler Scholars Program are empowered to be leaders and, in turn, give back to their communities and the students who follow behind them,” says Wilpon.

Queens College will welcome the first cohort of Kessler Scholars in Fall 2020. “We are very grateful for the generosity of Fred and Judy Wilpon,” says Laurie Dorf, Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations. “Our first generation students will truly benefit from their philanthropy. The programs offered, including internship opportunities and mentoring, will help ensure student success.”

To recognize an institution within an institution, the Aaron Copland School of Music had planned to hold a concert in LeFrak Hall on March 27 to mark the birthday of Professor Emeritus Alexander Kouguell, an acclaimed cellist who spent 68 of his 100 years teaching at QC. Due to the coronavirus, the party moved online, featuring performances by ACSM faculty Konstantza Chernov, Arbie Orenstein, Daniel Phillips, Donald Pirone, Morey Ritt, and Edward Smaldone, who sang “You Make Me Feel So Young” with lyrics adapted for the occasion. Friends and former students from all over the world Zoomed into the event. Raymond Erickson reported on the extensive newspaper coverage Kouguell accumulated over his career, and ACSM Director Michael Lipsey shared his admiration for Kouguell’s success as both a performer and an educator. Then the honoree himself took the virtual podium to comment on the path that led him to a position at QC. “How happy I was to spend 68 years of my life with this wonderful department, wonderful students, and the dearest of colleagues,” concluded Kouguell, who gave all his cellos, bows, music, and memorabilia to ACSM, accompanied by a generous donation. Previously, with his late wife, he established the Alexander and Florence Kouguell Cello Scholarship for a talented cello soloist at QC who excels academically and also participates in chamber music and the Queens College Orchestra.
The Band of Brotherhood
How one fraternity is “pledging” to make a difference

by Jennifer Beiner and Sara Kahan

In November 2018, Robert Jacobs ’70 had an epiphany. By reading a newspaper article about former Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s generous donation to Johns Hopkins University—giving that no accepted student would be unable to attend because of financial circumstances. In that moment, Jacobs knew that his time had come to make a difference at his alma mater, Queens College. With a month to think about it, he established a scholarship to benefit students of academic merit who need financial assistance.

Born in the Bronx and raised in Queens, Jacobs boasts that his Phi Epsilon Pi brothers to rekindle friendships while cultivating endowment has funded seven student scholarships over the past year and a half. Further, it has inspired a fellow fraternity, Zeta Beta Tau, and continues to grow with consistent gifts throughout the year. Working alongside Jacobs, Ron Frank ’68 and Jay Neuschatz ’69 provide expertise as a special consultant. . . .

Robert Gary Corporate Excellence Award at the Glen Garden Gala. Winners’ Concert and Dinner, held Sunday, October 20, 2019, at New York City’s Gotham Hall, honored him for “his consummate professionalism, passion, and commitment to the cause,” which spans more than 40 years. . . . Samuel Kohan joined it as the fundraiser for the event, and presented the fourth anniversary of Whitney LLP in its New York office as a partner in its Bankruptcy and Financial Restructuring Practice. Kohan has a strong background in finance and accounting and then to regions outside the United States. He is recognized for his “consummate professionalism, passion, and commitment to the cause,” which spans more than 40 years. . . .

The coronavirus pandemic forced families to cancel weddings, vacations, and holiday get-togethers. But Joseph Jacob and Malka David—who met at QC, got engaged in December 2020, and got engaged the next month—married on June 8, as they originally planned.

The newlyweds, who agree on most issues apart from who infuse the book with personal experiences and the anger they feel. . . .

뎝 Hur, Beyond Shores: From Holocaust to Hope, published her memoir, . . . 1958: . . .

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chosen to be the City of Stamford’s 2019 Citizen of the Year. Ostuw has been deeply involved in the nonprofit community for the past twenty years. She is the cofounder and current board member of Building One Community. The Center for Immigrant Opportunity, which brings together passionate people to help immigrants and their families succeed. She also serves as the treasurer for Impact Fairfield County, an organization dedicated to collective philanthropy, and treasurer of St. Francis Episcopal Church, where she helps deliver meals, and services and moves for parishioners to support local and international service organizations.

1977: Howie Race, the long-time New York Mets radio broadcaster, was inducted into the New York State Baseball Hall of Fame last November. Race has called Mets games on radio or television since 1995 and was previously a broadcaster for the New York Rangers and Islanders. “I’m really trying to embrace the tremendous honor that this is—it’s a privilege to represent the organization that I grew up in love with,” said Race in his induction speech.

1978: Pat Odell was elected a counselorwoman to the Galaten Town Board in Galatin, NY. She said her goals are to improve communications in the sparsely populated area and to support senior citizens.

1980: Alumna Irene Morgan was named executive director of the YWCA of Gloucester County, Virginia. Morgan, an African-American woman, was known for her refusal to give up her seat on a bus to a white trawler while traveling from Virginia to Maryland on July 16, 1944—11 years before Rosa Parks’ refusal to move to the back of a city bus. Morgan’s stand led to a Supreme Court decision that segregation in interstate travel was illegal. She is the recipient of an honorary degree at the age of 93. She died in 2006. Her proposal to give a centennial marker dedicated in her honor in September. Their performance was described as “nothing short of spectacular.”

1985: A United Nations peacekeeping force was deployed in the African country.

1987: Linda McRae was elected as Suffolk County Executive for a third term. As the 2020 New York State Senator for the 23rd District, and a Congressional Achievement Award, from Congresswoman Gregory Meeks (NY-5), as the Chairwoman of Long Island’s County Executive for a third term.

1990: Jeffry Osbourne was named chairman and president of the board of directors of Vanguard National Land Services last October. In this role, he oversees large and complex transactions for Vanguard National’s prestigious client base.

1991: Alison Clark was re-elected as Suffolk County Executive for a third term.

If you or alumni you know are communicating virtually, please send group photos and a description to Jay.Hershenson@qc.cuny.edu.

COMPLIMENTS OF TWO HOUSES

House of Bamboo

House of Bamboo, founded in 1960, submitted this photo from its archives. See here are the house plans’s first president, Bob Abraham ‘53 (in the center of the middle row), with housemates (l. to r. top row) Pete Weisman, Barry Luber, Eddie Goldstein, Joel Berman, Danny Adelman, Dave Earmen, Sydney Mitchell, Richo Schlossberg, Frank Delboni, Steve Weiss, Alan Grossman, Gary Rasin, (middle row) Larry Fiedler, Spencer Sorkin, Herb Stein, Allen Hauptman; (bottom row) Rossy Osorio, Steve Ross, Richa Brown, and Norman Fegan.

Zooming into the Present

Since the spring, a group of alumni and longstanding friends from New York, Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, and California has been holding Saturday night dinners over Zoom. Featured here are QC graduates from the 1970s and ’80s—mostly, former student government and campus media leaders, including several who served as student body presidents and vice-presidents—and in nearly half the images, their spouses. All the alumni enjoyed highly successful careers in their chosen pursuits; some are currently practicing law and some have retired but remain involved in various ways.

Left to right, top row: Jedd Moskowitz (QC ’73), Wendy Backerman (Parsons School of Design ’79), Richard F. Rothbard (QC ’76), Cathy Loeb Rothbard (QC ’76), Arthur Edelstein (QC ’74), Philip Alfonsio Barry (QC ’73). Middle row: Steven Mayo (QC ’75), Debra Kesner Mayo (Stony Brook ’74), Lydia Grosfeld Rock (QC ’77), Randy Rock (QC ’76), Jay Hershenson (QC ’76), Mark Lewak (QC ’73, ’86). Bottom row: Richy Orist (QC ’76), Rodney Perlman (QC ’72), Clairea G. Weiss (QC ’75), Larry Friedman (QC ’73), Barry Mitchell (QC ’74).
QUEENS ALUMNI NOTES

by a margin of 15% to 43%. Bellone says the challenges facing the county are numerous. "We are going to keep fighting for better solutions. . . ."

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Queens: A Memoir of Love, Memory, and the Language of Self. The book is described as a "charming, funny, true-life memoir, propelled by the author's captivating and engaging voice of our compulsively honest narrator. A real page-turner..."

A real page-turner..."

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QUEENS ALUMNI NOTES

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“Timing is everything when it comes to taking a memorable photo,” says QC Peace Officer Kevin Lam, an essential staffer who reports to campus regularly, with his camera, while most members of the college community work or study from home. “I happened to walk by Jefferson Hall when I saw the rainbow and took the opportunity to capture the image.” Photography is a lifelong passion for Lam, who majored in it at Hunter College and enjoys sharing his scenery shots with friends.
Join us for a concert featuring the
Queens College
Aaron Copland School of Music
and the presentation of the
Marvin Hamlisch
International Music Awards

The Marvin Hamlisch International Music Awards are presented in proud partnership with Queens College, The City University of New York in honor of legendary alumnus Marvin Hamlisch.

Additional information to follow.

*Guest stars from the 2019 Marvin Hamlisch International Music Awards.