



Discimus ut serviamus: **We learn so that we may serve.**

#52

## What's News

### **Empowered by the Higgins Scholarship, Two Struggling Single Mothers Earn Degrees**



Rosanna Batista



Tameka Edwards-Hepburn

Two of this year's proud QC graduates—aspiring CPA Rosanna Batista, and would-be teacher Tameka Edwards-Hepburn—credit the Linda Higgins Empowerment Scholarship with allowing them to complete their degrees. Both women pursued higher education while burdened with significant family and work obligations. Matthew Higgins '98, keynote speaker for his alma mater's 95th commencement on Thursday, May 30, established the scholarship to honor his late mother Linda Higgins, also a QC graduate.

"A weight lifted from my shoulders," is how Battista, an Ozone Park resident, felt after learning she'd received the scholarship. "I'd run out of TAP (state financial aid) and so was in a tight situation, worrying about paying tuition and graduating. The award kept me positive and on the right track." Edwards is equally grateful about her scholarship, saying, "It meant that I didn't have to leave school." A native of Kingston, Jamaica, she has assumed serious responsibilities since she was a teenager, when she took on the care and lifelong upbringing of her infant niece. Until her marriage last month, she was the single mother of a son, now 14, and a daughter, now 8.

A single mother, Linda Higgins faced dire poverty while raising four children. But in Matthew Higgins' words, the college "... affirmed her dignity and self-respect. To so many who work their way through school, or who battle struggles at home, or who summon the will to return to college after years of prolonged absence, this is an oasis..." He went on to become vice chairman of the Miami Dolphins and cofounder and CEO of the private investment firm RSE Ventures. Last fall, he made his "guest shark" debut on the ABC-TV reality show "Shark Tank."



Matthew Higgins

"Matt's scholarship program honors his roots while making success stories like his possible for the next generation," says CUNY Chancellor and Queens College President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez. "The experiences of people like Tameka Edwards and Rosanna Batista are at the foundation of our efforts at Queens College. Every degree that we confer at commencement is proof of a dream realized, for so many women and men who might not otherwise have had an opportunity to earn one. The significance of having an alumnus like Matt Higgins support those opportunities—based on his own life experience and his continuing commitment to the college—is powerful, and we are eager to see the bright futures that Rosanna and Tameka build because of it."

"Queens College is a haven for those whose lives have taken them down an unconventional path," adds Higgins. "Watching my mother single-handedly raise four boys while working, battling chronic health issues and pursuing higher education taught me the true meaning of sacrifice and the value of a college degree. The Linda Higgins Empowerment Scholarship is a way to honor my mother's legacy by eliminating the barriers that may otherwise keep mothers like Rosanna and Tameka from obtaining a degree. It reinforces the fact that Queens College is a place where the promise of an excellent education is not contingent on means, but on mettle."

QC celebrates all of the members of the class of 2019. To learn about two more of this year's graduates, please see the videos of Carmine Couloute, and Khaleel Anderson, a graduate of QC's new Accelerated Master's in Urban Affairs.

CARMINE COULOUTE  
B.A. in Political Science,  
Economics & Sociology

Watch Video

A video thumbnail for Carmine Couloute. It features a close-up of her face as she speaks. The text "CARMINE COULOUTE" is in a red box, with "B.A. in Political Science, Economics & Sociology" below it. A large red play button icon is overlaid on the bottom right.

KHALEEL ANDERSON  
B.A. & M.A. in Urban Studies

Watch Video

A video thumbnail for Khaleel Anderson. It features a close-up of his face as he speaks. The text "KHALEEL ANDERSON" is in a red box, with "B.A. & M.A. in Urban Studies" below it. A large red play button icon is overlaid on the bottom right.



At the Mellon Mays graduation ceremony on May 23, Francoise Pierre-Louis (in suit), director of the undergraduate program, and (far right) teaching assistant Nicole Nowbahar celebrate with fellows from the class of 2019: (from left) David Ahamad, Marilyn Saez, Carmine Couloute, Jessica Massiah, Daniel Kim, and Gabrielle Jean-Louis.

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### **Students Join Recovery Mission**

Six QC students will be doing volunteer work this summer through the New York Stands with Puerto Rico Recovery and Rebuilding Initiative. Fatima Kouser, Tiffany McBurnie, Kaven Orozco, Joshua Rivera, Ethel Rodriguez, and Eribel Zapata will receive training in the city before they are deployed to the island, where they will help clean, restore, and rebuild homes damaged in Hurricanes Maria and Irma. Hundreds of CUNY and SUNY students have participated in New York Stands with Puerto Rico, launched last year by Governor Andrew Cuomo.



### **Philosophy Professor Retires After More Than Half a Century at QC**

After 52 years at Queens College, Harvey Burstein (Philosophy) has finally decided to call it a career.

Burstein came to QC in the fall of 1967, believing in the importance of communicating the views of the world. He wanted to teach students about the meaning and value of their lives and encourage them to engage in deeper self-reflection. An expert on Ancient Greek philosophy and the dialogues of Plato, he has taught more than 20 different courses in philosophy during his time on campus.

Burstein's proudest achievement is winning the Queens College Presidential Excellence in Teaching Award in 1990—the first year the award was given out. His teaching has inspired others to enter the field; two of Burstein's former students, Jessica Polish and Salvatore Miceli, went on to become QC philosophy professors themselves.



In addition to mentoring future scholars, Burstein is the father of QC alumnus and six-time Tony-nominated actor Danny Burstein '86.

One of the things Burstein will miss the most is the commitment of students to philosophy. He said that the students at the college have changed a lot over the years, but their commitment to Philosophy has not. He will also miss the opportunity to be challenged in the classroom and to inspire students.

Upon his retirement, Burstein still plans to teach part-time, but also wants to pursue writing projects on both Plato and Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza.

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### **Annual Parking Lottery Accepting Applications**

You have to be in it to win it: Now is the time for day students to enter the lottery for on-campus parking spaces. The lottery, open to students with an active CAMS account,\* will close on Sunday, July 28, 2019, at 11:59 pm.

To apply, [click here](#). After submitting your application, you will receive an email confirming that it has been accepted.



Beginning on August 5, 2019, lottery participants will be notified via email whether or not they are eligible to purchase a parking decal. Those who are eligible will be assigned either the week of August 13 or August 20 to visit Jefferson Hall 201 to purchase/pick up a decal.

Lottery winners will be permitted to purchase a decal only during their assigned week. Whether or not you pay online, the transaction must be completed at Jefferson Hall. If you can't come in during your assigned week, you may send a representative in your place. That person must bring a valid photo ID, a copy of your driver's license and car registration, payment, your student ID, and your class schedule.

If you're a night student—all of your classes have start times after 2 pm—you're in luck! Do not enter the lottery; just submit your [application here](#), selecting "Evening." Beginning on August 22, 2019, evening students may purchase a parking decal in Jefferson Hall 201.

\*If you do not have a CAMS account, please visit the Help Desk at Dining Hall 151 or contact 718-997-4444.

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### **QC Sets Menu for Business Breakfast Forum in June**

Asian American Women Entrepreneurs will be the topic at the next Business Forum Breakfast, taking place at the Student Union Ballroom on Friday, June 28, 2019, from 8 to 10 am. Jennifer Rambarran, director at PricewaterhouseCoopers, will moderate a panel comprising Tammy Mooney, associate state director for operations and finance at the New York State Small Business Development Center; Hanah Tran, who runs the FHH Group, a next-generation platform of technology and trading agencies; and Christina Seid of the Flushing Ice Cream Factory, a spinoff of her family's Chinatown business. This event is presented in conjunction with Congresswoman Grace Meng, Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, and the Greater Flushing Chamber of Commerce.

To reserve a seat [click here](#) or call 718-570-0625, register by June 24.



Cecilia McHugh (School of Earth and Environmental Sciences) travels the world studying ancient sediment and mapping sea floors to learn more about past earthquakes and, possibly, anticipate future natural disasters. “By going back in time, we can predict how frequently earthquakes strike in a particular region,” she says.

In 2017, McHugh and some of her students documented an 8.5-magnitude earthquake that occurred in Bangladesh in 1762. In addition, the team collected evidence of a possible tsunami during that time. Today, in a country with a population of 160 million, an earthquake of this magnitude could be ruinous, which is why McHugh’s research is so important: What she learns can help governments understand and prepare for future risks.

McHugh examined sediment samples in Haiti in 2010 and Japan in 2011 following the devastating earthquake and tsunami that hit each area. She led the study in Haiti just a few weeks after the earthquake; the team discovered unmapped faults. Their work was cited by the Obama White House. Last fall, in recognition of her scientific contributions, McHugh was elected a fellow of the Geological Society of America. As part of the International Ocean Discovery Program, she will lead—together with collaborators from Austria and Japan—a team of scientists in drilling in the Japan Trench at a depth of eight kilometers.

McHugh’s teaching has inspired many students who have gone on to successful careers of their own. “It’s most rewarding to see them do well, whatever their goals are, whether it’s to pursue a PhD, work for an environmental company, or teach,” she observes.

McHugh couldn’t imagine teaching anywhere else. “The diversity, by far, is what I like most about Queens College,” she says. “It is amazing. I went to my laboratory the other day and saw four students working—one from India, one from Nepal, one from Greece, and another from Taiwan.”

Her background allows her to connect on a deeper level with QC’s diverse population. Born in Argentina, McHugh came to the United States after high school and did not speak English. She eventually learned the language and went on to earn a PhD, all while raising two young sons. She sees many of her students struggling with similar challenges and encourages them: She succeeded, and they can, too.

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## Summer Comes to Campus

Registration remains open for QC's summer session, which starts next week. With hundreds of classes and flexible scheduling, there's something for everyone. Go to [www.qc.cuny.edu/summer](http://www.qc.cuny.edu/summer) for details.

## Heard Around Campus



**The CUNY Service Corps'** sixth cohort will celebrate their successful completion of the program on Wednesday, May 29, from 1:30 to 3 pm in Music Building, Room 264; the campus community is invited . . . . **Gauthier Giacomoni** '09, an editor at CBS News Radio, just released a **documentary on the Grateful Dead** . . . . **The Hellenic American Project/Sociology Department** and Special



Collections at the Benjamin Rosenthal Library signed a deed of gift to accept materials from the family of the late photographer and filmmaker Vincent Giordano, who documented the Greek-Jewish community of Kehila Kedosha Janina in New York as well as the synagogue and community in Ioannina, Greece . . . . **Kara Schlichting** (History) was awarded a Rachel Carson Center fellowship for spring 2020.

This is the last QView of Spring 2019. Have a wonderful summer! We'll resume publication in the fall semester.

**Comments and suggestions for future news items are welcome.  
Send them to [jay.hershenson@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:jay.hershenson@qc.cuny.edu).**