



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

#3

What's News



College's 93rd Commencement to be Held May 26

Donald Brownstein, Saul Kupferberg, and Congresswoman Grace Meng are among the honorees at the college's 93rd Commencement ceremony on Friday, May 26, at 9 am on the Quad. Congresswoman Meng, who will be the Commencement speaker, will receive the President's Medal in recognition of her longstanding service to the people of Queens.

Other speakers scheduled to appear include Queens Borough President Melinda Katz; Toby Ann Stavisky, State Senator for District 16; Nily Rozic, Assemblywoman for District 25; Rory I. Lancman, Council Member for the 24th District of the New York City Council; CUNY Trustee Rita Dimartino; and CUNY Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Christopher Rosa.

Two prominent supporters of QC will be receiving honorary doctorates. Donald Brownstein '65 has had a diversified career: After teaching philosophy at two

universities, removed into the financial realm, becoming chief investment officer and CEO of Structured Portfolio Management. In 2012 he established a scholarship fund in the name of one of his most influential teachers, Professor John J. McDermott. Saul Kupferberg is a devoted member of the Queens College Foundation and a founding member and current chair of the Kupferberg Center Arts Advisory Board at Queens College. Both will be receiving honorary doctorates during the ceremony.

The Baccalaureate ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 25. During this event the college will award the President's Medal to Celeste A. Guth '82, to acknowledge her dedication to QC, student excellence, and the global community. Guth is the managing director and co-head of the Global Financial Institutions Group at Deutsche Bank.

Above l-r: Donald Brownstein, Saul Kupferberg, and Grace Meng.



Student Winners Day

Accomplished undergraduates got their moment in the sun and on stage with President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez when the college held its first QC Winners Celebration on the Quad during free hour on Monday, May 15 ([see NY1 coverage](#)). Attendees enjoyed pizza, snacks, and frozen treats as the president commended a steady parade of top performers, starting with the teams that placed first and second in the statewide coding competition and the teams that swept first, second, and third in the CUNY Hack-a-thon (pictured above with the president).

The next students to be acknowledged included Fulbright honorees, recipients of the Asian American and Native Pacific Islander-Serving Institution Scholarship, the Boren Scholarship, and the New York City Urban Fellowship, individuals awarded positions with the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program, and medalists at the 2017 Long Island Chemical Society Challenge. The event concluded with sport-by-sport salutes to this season's many successful Knights, who were too numerous to accommodate on stage at one time: Honorable Mention, All-America diver Mustafa Ibrahim; the women's and men's tennis teams, both of which made it to round 16 of the NCAA championships and national rankings; and the women's basketball team, which brought home QC's first NCAA Division II East Regional Championship and finished in the Elite 8. Congratulations to all! And thanks to the faculty and staff who worked with our winners.



Standing l-r: Prof. Tao Wang (QC, Economics), Dr. Howard Kleinmann (QC, Director of China Program), President Matos Rodríguez, Prof. YAO Jian (USST, Director of Personnel), LI Qin (USST, Vice Director of Teaching Administration), Prof. YU Yiqi (USST, College of Foreign Languages); *seated l-r:* Dean William McClure (Arts & Humanities), Provost Elizabeth Hendrey, Prof. SUN Yuedong (USST, Vice President for Undergraduate Academic Affairs), and Dean LIU Qin (USST, College of Foreign Languages).

QC Signs Agreement with University of Shanghai for Science and Technology

On May 8 the college signed a groundbreaking 2+2 articulation agreement with the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology (USST). It will bring USST students to QC as part of a program permitting them to earn two undergraduate diplomas at once, in just four years and one summer: a BA in English from USST, and a BA in economics from QC. The agreement was signed by four of the principals who helped shepherd it through the two institutions: QC's Provost Elizabeth Hendrey and Dean of Arts and Humanities William McClure, and from USST, Vice President for Undergraduate Academic Affairs SUN Yuedong and Dean of the College of Foreign Languages LIU Qin.

All the representatives spoke of the importance of international education to their schools, which have had close relationships among faculty and administrators for the past 20 years. As President Félix Matos Rodríguez said, "There is nothing better than to do something historic among friends." The first group of students will arrive in June. Hendrey noted that "I was very moved by presiding over the USST commencement last June and meeting your very impressive students. With that caliber of students, we're really excited to welcome them to the Queens College community."

Meet the Queens Influentials

President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez was profiled in the May 15 issue of *City & State*. In addition, as one of twenty-five

“Influentials” from the borough of Queens, he will be honored by the magazine at a reception on Thursday, May 18, at the Central Lounge in Astoria. The Influentials are 25 prominent individuals who live or work in Queens in five key sectors: banking/finance, law/lobbying, real estate, technology, and foundations/nonprofits. President Matos Rodríguez is the only college president in the borough to be so honored. Other honorees with QC credentials include Barbara Bowen (English), president of the Professional Staff Congress, and Arthur Cheliotis '70, president of Local 1180 Communications Workers.

MSEd Degree in Math and Computers Debuts this Fall

This fall the college will introduce a new Master of Science in Education that leads to New York State certification in mathematics-computer science for grades 7-12. It is intended to foster the teaching of computational thinking and computer skills in middle and high schools. According to Dean of Education Craig Michaels, this degree responds to curriculum innovations sought at the city, state, and federal levels. In September 2015 New York City launched Computer Science for All, a ten-year initiative in the public schools for students of all grades for which, with National Science Foundation funding, nearly 5,000 teachers will be trained in computer science.

Developing the new MSEd degree involved collaboration with many stakeholders as well as faculty in Queens College's education, computer science, and mathematics programs. As pointed out by President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, who is a member of the mayor's NYCTech Talent Pipeline Academic Council, "It's crucial that students learn the practical skills and critical thinking needed to be effective citizens--not just digital consumers--in our technology-focused society."

Students Accepted into CUNY Startups Accelerator

In a recent competition, one of the winning teams from the CUNY Hack-a-thon has been accepted into the CUNY Startups Accelerator. They will receive initial funding to work during the summer and will be mentored by professionals to further develop and implement their business idea. The winning team members are Remel Kabir, Alester Lewis, Megan Kale, Bryan Charlie, and Angelo Zamudio, all seniors in the Computer Science Department. Angelo currently works at the Tech Incubator. The other four students were Tech Talent Pipeline residents for Spring 2017.

Celebrating Extraordinary Achievement--With a Queens Accent



Queens College President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez honored three extraordinary women alumni at the college's annual gala on May 3 at Guastavino's in Manhattan. In a celebration that coincides with the college's 80th anniversary year (*above l-r*), President Matos congratulated Muriel Sapir Greenblatt, who was honored with the Alumni Award; Emmy-nominated actress, author, and advocate for cancer awareness Fran Drescher, who was recognized with the college's Lifetime Achievement Award; and foreign language educator and community revitalization activist Evelyn M. Strauch, who received the President's Award. Juliet Papa '68, award-winning 1010 WINS radio reporter, served as host and emcee for the third consecutive year. The Queens College Foundation raised over \$1 million at the Gala, which will be used for student scholarships.



Also seen at the Gala were members of the Rowland family: Merrick, MacKenzie, Stacey (mother), and Madison. Madison and MacKenzie, key players on this year's historic women's basketball team, will soon be heading overseas to play professional basketball. Merrick will continue her studies at QC and play for the Knights.



Yvette Caro

Queens College Psychological Center

Mental health care is usually out of reach for low-income and disadvantaged people, which has made the Queens College Psychological Center (QCPC) an indispensable safety net for underserved children and adults. Most recently, for instance, it has been offering pro bono psychological services to traumatized immigrants and refugees as part of Professor Valentina Nikulina's Youth in Transition Program.

As a community mental health clinic, research center, and training clinic for the college's PhD Program in Clinical Psychology and its Psychology Department, QCPC provides professional help to both the public and CUNY students regardless of their ability to pay, though certain vulnerable patients have priority status--especially survivors of domestic violence, undocumented immigrant families, and children struggling with behavioral problems and learning needs in under-resourced city schools.

QCPC's hybrid mission as an academic training and mental health clinic is governed by a commitment to excellent, evidence-based services. Provided mainly by doctoral candidates under the supervision of licensed faculty, these services range from evaluation and testing to therapy and other counseling. As director and psychology professor Yvette Caro says, "QCPC provides effective, ethical, culturally responsive, compassionate, and accessible care to those who otherwise would lack access to affordable mental health treatment."

Faculty and Staff Milestones



Saluting Long-time Members of the College

The college held its annual Longevity Ceremony on Tuesday, May 9 in the President's and Q-Side Lounges in the Dining Hall. The honorees were those who have given 20 or 35 years of service to the college.

20+ Year Service Award Recipients: Roberta Brody, Graduate School of Library & Information Studies; Elizabeth Chin, Office of the Dean of Mathematics and Natural Sciences; Colleen Cool, Graduate School of Library & Information Studies; Glenn Crutch, Public Safety; Linda DiDomenick, Chemistry and Biochemistry; Hester Eisenstein, Sociology; Markus Erndl, Office of Information Technology; Subash Gandhi, Library; Deborah Huggins, Public Safety; David Jolley, Music; Nancy Leighton, Counseling Services; Wendy Leung, Registrar; Aruna Mahadeo, Provost's Office; Teresa Muga, Child Development; Mindy Nadworny, Admissions; Kenneth Rosenberg, Library; Francine Sanchez,

Worker Education; Shiendra Sanichar, Office of Information Technology; Christine Spreizer, European Languages; Robert Twible, Athletics and Recreation; and Michael Watts, Buildings and Grounds

35+ Year Service Award: Melvin Bernstein, Mathematics; Andrew Beveridge, Sociology; David End, Mathematics; Linda Farhood Karasavva, English; Howard Kleinmann, Academic Support Center; Arlene Kraat, Linguistics; Leonard Ramroop, Psychology; Charles Siebert, Buildings and Grounds; Dean Tully, Accounting; and Richard Vetere, Media Studies

Alumni News

Two Notable Alumni Honored by Political Science Department



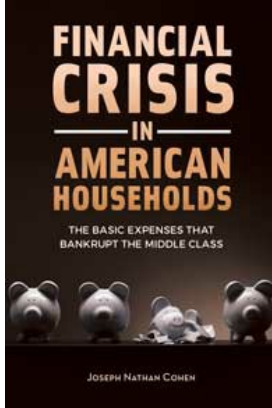
On Monday, May 15, the Political Science Department honored two of its distinguished alumni at its annual Honors and Awards Ceremony. The Distinguished Alumnus Award, the department's highest honor, was given to Congressman Adriano Espaillat '78, the first Dominican American elected to a state legislature (serving in the NYS Assembly 1997–2010 and the NYS Senate 2011–2016). In 2016 he also became the first Dominican American elected to the U.S. Congress. Originally a community leader in Washington Heights, he enrolled in the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program at Queens College and earned his BA in political science.



The Distinguished Service Award was given to Cristina Jiménez '07, cofounder and executive director of United We Dream, the largest organization in the United States led by immigrant youth. Having arrived from Ecuador at age 13, she attended high school and Queens College as an undocumented student, earned her BA in political science, and then earned a master's in public administration. As an undergraduate she cofounded the NYS Youth Leadership Council, and has been an activist and organizer for immigrant rights. In 2014 she was named to the *Forbes* list of "30 under 30 in Law and Policy."

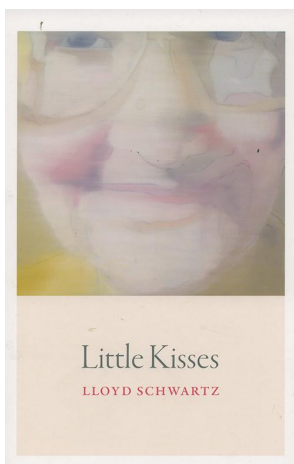
QC Bookshelf

Although declining real wages and growing inequality have led to protests on the streets and at the ballot box, some economists and politicians say that Americans must accept responsibility for their own financial difficulties. These are due, they say, to the rampant consumerism that leads too many people to heedlessly accumulate TVs, smartphones, clothes, and the like. This picture is vigorously challenged



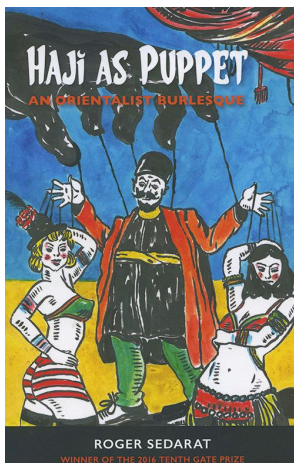
by **Joseph Nathan Cohen** (Sociology) in *Financial Crisis in American Households: The Basic Expenses that Bankrupt the Middle Class* (Praeger). Cohen argues that such "luxury" consumer goods have become affordable to almost everyone. The real reason people are hurting, he argues, is that the major costs of *basic necessities*--especially housing, education, and health care--have risen dramatically and put households in a precarious position. His research suggests that this has been a persistent structural problem, and he believes it requires new public

policy. Instead of blaming citizens, the fault should be laid at the door of neoliberalism and "the rather laissez-faire system in the United States. . . . Other highly developed countries do not put their people in such difficult dilemmas."



Lloyd Schwartz '62 has published *Little Kisses* (University of Chicago Press), a collection of new poems about life, death, leave-taking, and the small signs of imminent departure. With his ear for dialogue and piquant sense of humor, Schwartz offers sharp observations on the odd and quotidian moments that punctuate late life. Winner of the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Criticism, Schwartz is the Frederick S. Troy Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts at Boston and a noted scholar of Elizabeth Bishop. Readers also may know him as a commentator on classical music and the visual arts

for National Public Radio's *Fresh Air*.



In *Haji as Puppet: An Orientalist Burlesque* (The Word Works), **Roger Sedarat** (English) skewers American Orientalism and its effects in the Middle East through the present day. Sedarat is an award-winning Iranian American poet and recent recipient of the Willis Barnstone Translation Prize, who in this work is engaged with the image of the puppet player. The collected poems explore Persian and Iranian identity, invoking a biting political theatre of the impersonations, ventriloquism, and gaze of empire. The book was awarded the 2016 Tenth Gate Prize.

To see more books published by the English Department faculty, [click here](#)

Heard Around Campus

Joshua Brumberg (Psychology) received a four-year



award for over \$458,000 from the National Institutes of Health for his project *The Influence of Perineuronal Nets on Cortical Neurons*. The project will use a mouse model to examine the link between sensory experience and the resulting chemical and physiological changes in the brain. Brumberg hopes these studies will lead to insights about the development of the brain and how sensory experience can affect it . . . **Giselle Cordero '17** has been selected as a New York City Urban Fellow . . .

Alumnus and former CUNY Dean **Dave Fields** recently took part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Dave Fields Lecture Hall (previously Kiely Hall 170), which is used for classes and meetings of the Academic Senate, for which Dave served as Deputy Chair, Secretary, and now Parliamentarian since the early 1970s. . .



Dave Fields

Courtney Harewood '16 was awarded a fellowship in the Japanese Exchange and Teaching program . . . **Jessica Harris** (English) was profiled in the *New York Times Magazine* on April 30. Her recently published memoir, *My Soul Looks Back*, has been widely praised . . .

Biology student **Joselyn Landazuri** received a full travel fellowship to attend next month's American Society for Microbiology conference and present a poster highlighting research in which she participated. Two teams, one based at QC in the lab of **Zahra Zakeri** (Biology), the other at Yale, collaborated on the study . . . [An article in the May 12 New York Times](#) looked at the influence music teacher Eugene Phillips had on his students, including his son **Daniel Phillips** (ACSM) . . . **Gregory Sholette** (Art) has just received his doctorate from the University of Amsterdam and published a book, *Delirium and Resistance: Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Pluto Press/University of Chicago) . . . **Anthony Julian Tamburri** and **Fred Gardaphé** (both Calandra Institute) will serve as directors and faculty members for the Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar, a three-week program being held at the University of Calabria next month . . .

John Tytell (English), widely considered to be the preeminent scholar of the writers of the Beat Generation, has just had his personal literary archive acquired by Third Mind Books. It includes over four decades of correspondence, audio interviews, manuscripts, journals, and more.

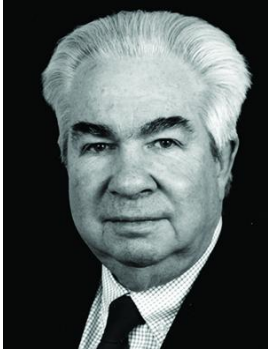


Mark Rosenblum Honored

Mark Rosenblum (Emeritus History) was honored May 15 with an Uncommon Courage Award from the Center for Ethnic, Racial and Religious Understanding (CERRU). The gala in Manhattan was emceed by Tony-Award winner Mandy Patinkin. Rosenblum, a cofounder of CERRU, which is based at QC, has met with Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama regarding Middle East foreign policy and has played a key role in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. During his 30 years at the college, Rosenblum taught history and served as the director of the Center for Jewish Studies. He received much media coverage for his project "The Middle East and America: Clash of Civilizations or Meeting of the

Minds," in which Jewish and Muslim students had to defend the views of the group they were not part of. The project was funded by grants from the Ford Foundation and the Clinton Global Initiative.

In Memoriam



Burton L. Backner died at his home on Thursday, April 27, at the age of 85. He graduated from Queens College in 1954, and during his years as a student was captain of the college's tennis team. Following graduation, Burt enlisted in the Army before returning to school to earn his master's degree and doctorate in psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

After five years working in a Veteran's Administration hospital in Manhattan, Burt returned to his alma mater. He spent close to 40 years here, first as a counselor in the Counseling Center and the SEEK Program. He went on to become Director of Counseling Services, Dean of Students, and ultimately Vice President for Student Affairs, before retiring in 2004. A special award in his name is the highest honor conferred by the college's Office of Student Affairs.

Burt was a superb example of the kind of graduate Queens College produces. He was a mild-mannered, first-class administrator any college would be deeply proud of, a man dedicated completely to his students. He saved countless student lives through counseling and other interventions to help them get on the right track to graduation, a source of much pride to his daughter Amie and son Tom.

Violet Jeffrey died on April 19 at the age of 85. She graduated from Franklin K. Lane High School and attended York College of the City University of New York. While working at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, she met and married Victor Jeffrey in 1952. They had two children, Shirlyn and Victor, who both survive her.

Vi worked at American Petroleum before coming to Queens College, where she spent twenty years. During this time, she began working for President Joseph S. Murphy and then served as Executive Assistant to the President for Saul B. Cohen and Shirley Strum Kenny. Vi combined personal warmth with great dignity and superb efficiency in the operation of the President's Office. She also volunteered at PS 499 during the time the school was first established on QC's campus.

Vi was an adventurous traveler, visiting Russia, Brazil, Israel, Egypt, and many other countries with her husband and friends.



Stephen Stepanchev, Professor Emeritus of English and the first poet laureate of the Borough of Queens (1997–2000), passed away on April 23 at the age of 102.

Born in the Serbian village of Mokrin, Stephen and his mother immigrated to Chicago when he was seven. "I didn't know a word of English," he noted, but ensconced in poetry and the public library, soon he knew thousands. On a scholarship, he graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Chicago and stayed for a master's degree.

Drafted during World War II, he served in the Army's Adjutant General's Office, returning from Europe with a Bronze Star, then earning his PhD at New York University.

Stephen taught at Queens College for 36 years. He recalled that “the students were very bright, very able. I taught them how to write poetry and a course in the history of American literature.” For QC’s 50th anniversary in 1987, Stephen edited *The People’s College on the Hill: Fifty Years at Queens College, 1937–1987*. He also had the last word in this book, the poem “Words for Queens College,” in which he summoned up one of his favorite poets:

*Walt Whitman rises from my boot-soles, takes
My hand, and shows me waves of immigrants
Come to renew the land. . . .
He shows me that life, not death, is permanent.*

Besides 13 volumes of poetry, Stephen was also the author of *American Poetry Since 1945*. He was buried in Flushing Cemetery.

(For more on Stephen, see the Spring 2015 issue of Queens Magazine.)

Mark Your Calendar

Save the Date

The LavenderLine: Coming Out in Queens

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Queens Pride Parade in June, LaGuardia Community College and Queens Museum will present *The Lavender Line: Coming Out in Queens*, a multimedia exhibition of the Queens LGBTQ community from the 1990s to the present. The event takes place on Friday, June 9, at 6 pm at the Queens Museum NYC Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

RSVP: <https://lavenderlineopening.eventbrite.com/>

Family-Friendly Concert

Zenen Zeferino featuring Radio Jarocho, Sunday, May 21, 3 & 7 pm, Joe’s Pub at the Public Theater, 425 Layette Street, NYC. Tickets: publictheater.org/Tickets

Presented in association with the Kupferberg Center for the Arts at Queens College and New York City Children’s Theater

QC in the News

Building Futures: QC Gala Video with Alumni Stars



Watch video

NY1: Celebrating Student Achievement Inside and Outside the Classroom



Watch video

**Comments and suggestions for future news items are welcome.
Send them to jay.hershenson@qc.cuny.edu.**