Building on the Legacy of Louis Armstrong
COMMEMORATIVE GIFTS

A Living Legacy

Commemorative gifts provide you with the opportunity to leave behind your own permanent legacy. There is no better way to honor a graduate, remember a professor, or memorialize a loved one.


Bricks will be placed in designated areas on the Queens College campus. They can be created in your name or to honor a classmate, professor, club, houseplan member, etc.

Tree Plaque: Choose a living tribute to help beautify the 80-acre college landscape. A bronze plaque will be placed at the base of your tree.

Kupferberg Center Seating Plaque will be placed on the armrest of one seat in either the 475-seat Goldstein Theatre or the 2,140-seat Colden Auditorium.

From the President

What a pleasure it was to participate in this summer’s ribbon-cutting for the new $26 million Louis Armstrong Center, subject of the cover story on page 14. First envisioned more than 20 years ago, the center features space for exhibitions, a jazz club for performances, and the extensive personal archive of Lucille and Louis Armstrong, formerly housed on the Queens College campus. The collection includes 650 home-recorded reel-to-reel tapes in hand-decorated boxes, 86 scrapbooks, 5,000 photographs, and 12 linear feet of papers, letters, and manuscripts. These materials will enhance scholars’ understanding of the musician widely regarded as the first great jazz soloist. The article, richly illustrated with photographs, serves as a tour of the center and captures the thrill of its opening, with the support of New York City and State governments. Do come and visit www.louisarmstronghouse.org/our-new-center/!

In other exciting news, Queens College Athletics had a banner year: Seven teams made it to the East Coast Conference playoffs and three went to the NCAA tournament. Read about these Knights to remember on page 8.

As it does every year, Queens magazine features accounts of accomplished alumni. Manuel Godoy ’17 founded Black Sands Entertainment with his wife, Griselda; the company specializes in comic books, graphic novels, video games, and animation rooted in a Black-centered appreciation of precolonial history. In our article, on page 20, Godoy explains how his major—economics—prepared him to run a business. Dominick Yezzo ’75 was recovering from his military tour in Vietnam when he enrolled at Queens College; he credits the college with giving him the education that enabled him to thrive in his multifaceted career as a writer, college professor, attorney, judge, and volunteer advocate for fellow veterans. He is profiled on page 22.

Rounding out this issue are stories about the first Diversity Week on campus (page 11); TIME 2000, a math teacher preparation program offered only at Queens College (page 12); and CUNY Distinguished Professor of Sociology Pyong Gap Min (page 18), whose research has focused on Koreans and Korean Americans.

We want to hear your stories, too. Contact us at qmag@qc.cuny.edu so we can share your news with the Queens College community.

Sincerely,

Frank H. Wu
President

Cover: The Louis Armstrong Center is a cultural and architectural landmark. Inset: Ready to cut the ribbon are (rear, from left) Community Board 3 Chair Frank Taylor, State Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, Louis Armstrong House Museum (LAHM) Board Chair Jay Hershenson, President Frank H. Wu, NYC Commissioner of Cultural Affairs Laura Carbone, State Senator Jessica Ramos, LAHM Board Treasurer Stephen Maliaewa, NYC Council Member Francisco Moya, Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation Board Member Jonathan Raskin, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, CUNY Chancellor Félix Rojas, and LAHM Board Members Oscar Chuseo and Larry Miller, and (center front) LAHM Executive Director Regina Bain.

Cover photos by Andrew Kelly.
Congratulations to the Class of 2023

Queens College held its 99th Commencement on June 1, conferring more than 5,100 undergraduate and graduate degrees on candidates from summer and fall 2022, and winter and spring 2023. Students were the stars of the occasion, but they shared the spotlight with alumni, faculty, and campus leaders. The ceremony featured a special presentation of the Queens College Medal at the May 30 Baccalaureate Awards Ceremony honoring student academic achievers.

Students Win Salk Awards

Every year, CUNY issues eight Salk Scholarships to graduates who have been admitted to medical school or a graduate program in biomedical sciences, so it’s a big deal for any college to have a single winner. In 2023, QCC had two: Eli Berglas ’22 and Amanda Brand ’22. Berglas, who participated in research in the college’s behavioral neuroscience lab under Richard Bodnar (Psychology), is attending Robert Wood Johnson Medical School at Rutgers University. Over four years of study, Berglas and Brand will each receive $8,000 toward the cost of attending school. The Salk Scholarship program honors City College graduate Jonas Salk, who developed the first polio vaccine and made it freely available for worldwide use. When offered a tickertape parade in New York City, he asked that the money go toward scholarships instead.

Changes Near the Top

Just in time for Fall 2023, Queens College announced several executive appointments. Maria DeLongoria was named interim associate provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs. DeLongoria came to QC from Modgair Rivers College, where she served as chair of the Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences, associate professor of History, and executive director of the Caribbean Research Center. Souya Munsch was appointed director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership. For the past year, Munsch led the Asian American / Asian Research Institute (AA/ARI) as interim executive director. Yung-Yi Diana Pan, most recently an associate professor of business law at Baruch College, joined the school as interim dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Gudlaugur Schaffer has published widely on topics in 19th-century literature and material culture, with over 50 articles on disability studies, numerous book reviews, as well as a novel and two collections of short stories. He has been awarded a fellowship in French literature, and was a Fulbright scholar in French literature. He is an associate professor of French at CUNY-wingston and other institutions.

CUNY Distinguishes QC Professors

Two QC faculty members—Ammiel Alcalay (Classical, Middle Eastern, and Asian Languages and Cultures) and Talia Schiffer (English)—are among the dozen scholars promoted in August 2023 to distinguished CUNY professorships. “The 12 faculty members who have recently been elevated to CUNY’s distinguished professorate join a group of extraordinary scholars and teachers who have built international reputations for their scholarship, creativity, and vision,” said Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez. “We congratulate these individuals on this latest recognition of their accomplished status as leading lights within their fields.” Alcalay is a poet, novelist, translator, critic, and scholar with some 30 books to his credit, his next two titles, Controlled Demolition: A work in four books, and Follow the Person: Archival Encounters, will be published in 2024. He has written for The New York Times, Time magazine, The Village Voice, The New Republic, and Middle East Report, as well as for such literary journals as Grand Street, Conjunctions, and Paper Air.

Poetry Foundation Prizes Kimiko Hahn

In other news about the university’s distinguished faculty, Kimiko Hahn, CUNY Distinguished Professor of English, has won the Poetry Foundation’s Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize for 2023. The prize recognizes lifetime achievement and comes with a cash award of $100,000. Hahn has taught at QC for 30 years. She is the author of ten poetry collections, including Foreign Bodies, Brain Fever, Taxe; The Flower Burden to the Interior, The Unbearable Heart, winner of the American Book Award, and Earshot, winner of the Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize and an Association of Asian American Studies Literature Award.

Goldwater Scholar

Erik Pursaud ’23, who just received his bachelor’s degree in neuroscience, psychology, and biology and expects to complete his master’s in behavioral neuroscience and neuroeconomics next year, is one of 413 students to be named Goldwater Scholars for 2023–24. This is a tremendous achievement: winners were chosen from 1,267 students in natural science, engineering, and mathematics nominated by 437 academic institutions. Pursaud is a sought-after Qc undergraduate to date to receive this prestigious award.

Graced by Legislator’s Visits to Campus

Through the government spending package signed in early 2023 by President Joe Biden, Congresswoman Grace Meng earmarked more than $2 million in federal funds for Queens College’s Business Development Center. “After securing nearly $2 million last year for Queens College’s WETLAB, I’m proud to once again deliver another big check to the school, this one for more than $2.2 million for building partnerships with local small businesses and renovating Colleen Auditorium,” said Meng. “As New York’s senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, I’m thrilled to fight for Queens College, and I look forward to these projects benefiting the college and borough residents for years to come.”

In 2017, he received a George Washington University Book Award as the founder and general editor of Lost & Found: The Poetry Foundation Document Initiative. Schiffer has published widely on topics in 19th-century literature and material culture, with over 50 articles on disability studies, numerous book reviews, as well as a novel and two collections of short stories. He has been awarded a fellowship in French literature, and was a Fulbright scholar in French literature. He is an associate professor of French at CUNY-wingston and other institutions.
Alumni Entrepreneurs Build on College LaunchPad

Reginald Wills ’22 and Sujeon Wuu Wu’22 have big plans for their small start-up business.

In December 2022, Wills and Wu Wu finished first in the network round of the national Blackstone LaunchPad Business Ideas Competition, under the category of Social and Climate Impact. (They advanced to the national contest after winning the same category in the Queens College tier of the competition.) Now, with their prize—a $10,000 grant from the Blackstone Charitable Foundation—they’re developing the company they pitched, Collabiversity. Envisioned as an intermediary between brands and colleges, Collabiversity will create a merchandise and digital assets marketplace for students and alumni and raise scholarship funds for students. Wills and Wu Wu came up with the concept after casual brand Kith released its first limited QC collection and a portion of sales revenue to the college. “Mr. Wills and Ms. Wuu Wu put CUNY and Queens College on the map,” says Karl Mitchell (Economics), who taught both students in his Introduction to Business Writing course, encouraged them to work together, and mentored them through the competition. “They beat 45 other universities/colleges, including but not limited to Cornell University, NYU, UCLA, University of Texas, Baruch College, and Syracuse, in only Queens College’s second year of competing. It’s a huge deal.”

Aiming for the Moon with the Artemis I Mission

Artemis I got off the ground in November 2022 with the help of computer science major Umar Kagzi ’22. He was part of a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) team that developed software for the mission, an uncrewed test flight that orbited and flew beyond the moon. Specifically, as a software engineering intern for NASA, he helped write flight test software for the SLS (Space Launch System)—Artemis Program. “My primary task was to develop this software for both the Artemis I and Artemis II spacecrafts using Python and an internal NASA tool,” Kagzi explained. “The software tested the internal components and the guidance and navigation systems of the spacecrafts in a virtual environment to ensure they would work fine in the actual Artemis I spacecraft.” Kagzi worked for NASA as a software engineer for about two years; during much of that period he was studying at Queens College.

Since March 2023, he has been employed full-time as a software engineer for the consulting firm Accenture.

Discovery Rocks Anthropology

Contrary to popular belief, the world’s oldest profession is not483

Thomas Plummer (Anthropology) is the lead author of a paper recently published in Science showing that hominins—a term comprising modern humans and our extinct ancestors—used tools in food preparation 3 to 2.6 million years ago, as two molars discovered alongside the Paleolithic utensils come exclusively to human ancestors in the genus Homo. Intriguingly, two molars discovered alongside the Paleolithic utensils come from the extinct hominins Paranthropus, raising the possibility that members of that genus crafted tools, too.

Federal Officials Visit QC To Mark AANAPISI Week

On September 22, 2023, President Joe Biden issued the first-ever presidential proclamation declaring September 25-October 1 as Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander–serving Institutions (AANAPISI) Week. Four days later, NSF Paydar, U.S. assistant secretary for Presecondary Education—the highest-ranking federal higher education official—visited Queens College, highlighting the administration’s efforts to strengthen AANAPISIs and support the nation’s Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities.

AANAPISIs are defined as colleges or universities with an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 10 per cent Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander. QC, which hosts the AANAPISI Project, certainly qualifies. Among the project’s student services are multilingual tutoring, offered in collaboration with the college’s writing center, and opportunities for experiential learning through internships with local AAII institutions. Faculty have access to workshops designed to strengthen understanding of local AAII histories and issues and encourage development of AAII–focused course content.

Paydar visited campus with Steven Lamp, special assistant, U.S. Department of Education; Phil Kim, senior advisor, the White House; Erica Moritsugu, deputy assistant to the president and American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders senior liaison, the White House; Ting Wu, special advisor to the chief of staff for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders, NIH; the White House; and Erica Ninoyu, senior advisor, White House Initiative on AANHPIs. These officials met President Frank H. Wu and members of the college administration to discuss federal support for AANAPISIs, affordability and student retention initiatives, maintaining multiple minority-serving institution statuses, and student mental health challenges and support services. In connection with the visit, a panel of students covered topics such as belonging and inclusion, first-generation student status, English as a Second Language, and mental health.

Queens Honors King

Borough leaders turned out for the college’s MLK Day Celebration on Sunday, January 15, 2023, in LeFrak Concert Hall. New York City Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr., and Assembly Member Khadeil Anderson ’19 joined President Frank H. Wu and student leaders in offering greetings.

The program began with a stirring rendition of “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” the Black national anthem, by Aisysuma Lemann, an admissions counselor at QC. Event honoree Irelailo Cobb, dean of the Columbia Journalism School and staff writer for The New Yorker, delivered the keynote. The program also included the first screening of a video tribute, “The Legacy Connection: Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Queens College.” But for many, the most memorable part of the afternoon was a set by jazz vocalist Samara Joy, who brought down the sold-out house. The next month, she won two GRAMMY awards: Best New Artist and Best Jazz Vocal Album. In 2024, QC will hold its MLK Day Celebration on Sunday, January 14.
Great Sports

In 2022–2023, Athletics Had a Year for the History Books

By John Scarinci

The 2022–23 Queens College Athletics season was one to remember. The program was vastly improved from the previous year, with multiple teams making playoff runs and earning prestigious awards. Some teams even made school history by winning the conference championship, qualifying for their first NCAA tournament, or setting new school records.

FALL SPORTS

The 2022 men’s soccer team had one of those historic seasons. They won a program-record 13 games and hosted their first East Coast Conference (ECC) Semifinal game. Despite the loss in the semifinals, QC earned an at-large bid into the NCAA tournament—its first-ever NCAA Tournament bid.

For the opening round of the tournament, the Knights traveled all the way to Charleston, West Virginia, only to take on Adelphi University, a school located just 13 miles from Queens. Unfortunately, the Knights came up short in a hard-fought match, losing 1-0 to end their season.

Head coach Frank Vertullo was named the ECC Coach of the Year for leading the Knights in their extraordinary 2022 season. Senior defender Thomas Esperoe and sophomore midfielder Adolfo Martinez Paquet were each All-ECC First-Team selections, while junior forward Leo Pinto and senior goalkeeper Dario Giovanni Cruz garnered All-Conference Second-Team honors.

The awards didn’t stop there for Paquet, as he was named an All-American by the Division Two Conference Commissioners Association, earning a Third-Team selection.

The women’s volleyball team broke a long postseason drought in 2022 as they qualified for the ECC playoffs for the first time since the 2006 season. The Knights finished with 12 wins, the most they’ve had in a season since 2008. Although they fell to Molloy University in the opening round of the playoffs, the season was a success and step in the right direction for the program.

Freshman Ryann Frontera proved to be a difference maker, as she was named the ECC Libero of the Year after leading the ECC in digs per set (5.13 per game). Additionally, junior Alexis Deodat was voted to the ECC All-Conference Second Team and sophomore Christina Francis was an All-Conference honorable mention selection.

Although the women’s soccer team failed to reach the ECC playoffs, finishing with a conference record of 3-6-2, the Knights had two players earn at-conference honors. Senior midfielder Marina Pappas was a Third Team All-Conference selection as was sophomore defender Sarah Anderson.

For cross country, both the men’s and women’s teams placed fifth at the 2023 ECC Championships. On the men’s side, the Knights were led by Njehan Philip, who placed 15th at ECC Championships and qualified for the NCAA East Regional. For the women’s side, Rachel Mow also qualified for the NCAA East Regional.

WINTER SPORTS

The winter season was highlighted by the women’s basketball team, who qualified for the postseason for the first time since the 2017-18 season and then earned an upset victory in the ECC playoffs. The Knights came into the playoffs as the #8 seed and went on the road to knock off Mercy College, 66-52, in the opening round. Unfortunately, the Knights season ended in the next game in the ECC semifinals against St. Thomas Aquinas College.

Several student-athletes received post-season honors, led by freshman Brianna Davis, who was named the ECC Rookie of the Year; while also being named to the All-ECC Third Team and All-Metropolitan Second Team. Guards Raven Pitt and Chelsea Reeves received third-team All-Conference honors, too.

The men’s basketball team came up just short of qualifying for the ECC playoffs last season. Nonetheless, the Knights had some notable individual accomplishments. Senior center Tyler Carey was selected as the ECC Defensive Player of the Year and earned a spot on the All-Conference Second Team and the All-Metropolitan Second Team. Sophomore guard Sunnie Diamond was voted to the All-Conference Third Team.

The winter season came to a close with the welcoming of a new mascot to Queens College. The old mascot, “Sir Wins-a-Lot,” was laid to rest and his successor, “the Knight,” was anointed in a campus ceremony in February. “The fun and lively event helped set the tone for an exciting slate of spring sports.”

SPRING SPORTS

The spring season was full of thrilling moments and perhaps no Queens team had more thrills than the baseball team. The Knights captured their first ECC title since 1999 in dramatic fashion. Queens defeated rival Molloy University, 9-8, in the championship game, winning on a walk-off error in extra innings. The Knights earned a bit of revenge against Molloy, who had defeated them in the championship game the previous year. The win also automatically qualified the Knights for the NCAA regionals, their second appearance in school history.

The Knights won their first NCAA Tournament game in program history as they defeated Felician University, 7-4, before their season came to an end against Goldey-Beacom College. But that didn’t take away from an incredible season in which they set a school record for wins with 34.
The softball team returned to ECC playoffs for the first time since 2015—and they weren’t satisfied with just getting there. In the opening round of the tournament, the four-seeded Knights upset top-seeded Molloy University by a score of 9-0 to advance into the winner’s bracket. However, the Knights fell in their winner’s bracket game against St. Thomas Aquinas and were later eliminated by Molloy in a loser’s bracket matchup.

In addition to their team success, the Knights softball team received many individual accolades. Graduate student Alysson Dilday was a First-Team All-Conference selection. Dilday pitched a team-high 131.1 innings and finished with a 2.33 earned run average and eight wins. Senior utility player Ann Grimshaw and sophomore third baseman Emma Zumpol were each named to the All-ECC Second Team. Grimshaw batted .297 with a team-high 16 RBIs, while Zumpol batted .348 in conference games.

The outdoor track and field team showed improved results in the outdoor season. The Knights medaled in 12 events at the ECC Outdoor Track and Field Championships compared to two for the indoor season. On the men’s side, Demitola Babalola placed second in the 110-meter hurdles, Matthew Castro was third in the javelin throw, and Hakeem Griffiths earned the bronze in the triple jump. The 4x100 relay team also placed second.

For the women, Khareena Primus was third in the 100-meter dash and second in the 200-meter dash. Fatimma Morrobel won the bronze in the 800-meters. Bianca Hiltz finished third in the 100-meter hurdles and triple jump, and Madelyn Match placed second in the javelin. Additionally, the 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams each placed third.

In all, the Knights sent seven teams to the ECC playoffs and had three teams reach the NCAA tournament: 42 student-athletes were awarded postseason laurels, with six earning major ECC Awards. Six, named to an All-Region team, and one earning All-American status. The 2022–2023 Queens College athletics season will go down as one for the history books. The future is looking bright for another great season this year.

The men’s tennis team celebrates with the 2023 East Coast Conference Championship trophy. The Knights have won 5 ECC Championships in the last six years.

Members of a proudly multicultural institution developed insight into themselves and each other during Queens College’s first Diversity Week, sponsored by the CUNY Chancellor’s Campus Climate Initiative and the Petrie Foundation. Organized by Chief Diversity Officer and Dean of Diversity Jerima DeWese and her planning committee, the “week” was short, events ran from Monday, April 17, through Friday, April 21. But the programming met up to its billing, tackling a new theme each day.

Monday was devoted to climate. Let’s Talk about indoor climate, Race, Gender, Sexuality, and religion. Mental Health, held in the Tanenbaum Room of Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library, was modeled on speed dating. Participants were paired for a timed one-on-one conversation in which they could ask each other questions on unfamiliar subjects. Among the other events that day was an interactive exploration of Hebrew and Arabic calligraphy, and Disability Justice 101: Bodily Autonomy and race discussion conducted over Zoom.

In keeping with Tuesday’s theme—compliance—the president’s cabinet took part in bias and compliance training. For everyone, the New York City Human Rights Commission facilitated a workshop on bystander/upstander intervention.

Wednesday was the topic on Wednesday. Eugenics and the Roots of Racism in American Culture connected the now discredited work of 20th-century eugenacists—who believed they could improve human beings through genetic and hereditary— systems of racial hierarchy and ideas about biology, behavior, and identity. At free hour, the Quad highlighted food, music, and traditions from around the world. Afternoon programs included an exercise in painting LGBTQ+QAA pride, a presentation on the challenges faced by Italian Americans in higher education, and a workshop on how to realize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in classrooms, clubs, and departments.

Nontraditional students and first-generation students were the focus for the upcoming event on Thursday, which emphasized community. In HAIR-E-HAIR-E, interface fellows talked about hair types, care, and styling, as well as religious practices involving hair, such as head coverings and adornments. Over Zoom, players in the game-based platform Kahoots explored the intersections of oppression and sexual violence and learned how to support their communities and peers.

On Friday, under the topic of change, Diversity Week offered an all-day Dismantling and Combating Hate Conference. In this conference included a panel discussion with (from left) Nick Smith, first deputy public advocate, Office of the New York City Public Advocate; Wendy Garcia, deputy commissioner of Equity and Inclusion, New York Police Department; and Najiri Chaudhuri, deputy commissioner, Community Relations Bureau, Human Rights Commissioner, New York City Commission on Human Rights.

(For more information about the Petrie Foundation, see Increasing Opportunity on page 34.)
Strength in Numbers

Innovative QC program has been preparing math teachers for 25 years

By Jacquelyn Southern

These are memorable times for TIME 2000, Queens College’s groundbreaking program in math-teacher preparation. This year, the program has been celebrating its milestone 25th anniversary, on November 3, it hosted its 20th annual Celebrating Mathematics Teaching conference. Founding director Alice Artzt ’68, MS ’73, a mathematics education professor, created TIME 2000 after being dismayed by the high dropout rate among mathematics education students. In 1997, the National Science Foundation awarded her and Eleanor Armour-Thomas (Secondary Education and Youth Services, or SEYS) a grant to start a program based on a cohort model of strong students and a faculty mission of “producing excellent mathematics teachers.” The program was launched the following year.

Immersion, community, hard work, and high expectations are the backbone of TIME 2000, whose team of SEYS and Mathematics faculty prepare QC undergraduates to become mathematics teachers for grades 7–12. Whether freshmen, transfers, or QC students, applicants to the program must pass a high bar of grades, aptitude, four years of college-preparatory mathematics, serious commitment to a vocation as a mathematics teacher, and a letter of recommendation from a high school math teacher. Once admitted, they pursue a demanding curriculum of math and education courses. They also receive a tuition scholarship, faculty mentoring, enrichment opportunities, and the benefits of taking carefully sequenced coursework together as part of a close-knit cohort.

“The students benefit tenfold,” says TIME 2000 alumna Mara Markinson ’12, MSEd ’15, an assistant professor in SEYS. “They have an immediate cohort of peers who are becoming instant friends, moving through their courses with them, tutoring each other, there for each other.”

Artzt herself works with each student one on one. “It’s not like she puts them in the classes and that’s that,” says Alan Sultan (Mathematics), who helped shape the program. “She sees them again and again during the semester; she’s always asking about what’s going on in their lives, she takes a real interest in them, and they feel this.”

Students are prepared to expect diversity of all sorts in the classroom, and they learn methods designed to respond to a variety of needs. “The thing we try to prepare our students for are the typical 80 percent of all students who do not want to learn math and see no value in it,” says Artzt. During fieldwork, students are taken to observe and reflect on excellent teachers. “They all witness the same pedagogy that has been intentionally chosen,” explains Markinson. “We know what we want them to see. Then they have deeply reflective assignments that have them analyzing what they saw.”

To date, 312 students have graduated from TIME 2000. Most have had stunning success in their careers, with about 9 out of 10 teaching math well beyond their two-year commitment, and several working as assistant principals or principals. “We have an excellent retention record,” notes Artzt. “Nationally, the retention record of teachers is dismal. If they make it to five years, it’s a miracle. To our knowledge, approximately 88 percent of our graduates are still teaching.”

Queens College faculty also benefit from the program’s innovative structure, in which conversation, advising, and mentoring are key. Sultan credits TIME 2000 with enriching his own pedagogical experience. “I was a good teacher,” he recalls, “but I would go into the classroom, I would do my thing, I would go home, and that would be the end of it. But in the program, I got to know the students. I got to talk to the students. It was a step up.”

The annual Celebrating Mathematics Teaching conference is a showpiece of the student-centered TIME 2000 community. The event offers attendees—hundreds of high school students and their mathematics teachers along with TIME 2000 students and faculty—a chance to enjoy participating in mathematical explorations presented by exemplary teachers.

This year, Christine Franklin, an emerita professor from the University of Georgia as well as a fellow of and K-12 statistics ambassador for the American Statistical Association, shared lessons from more than 40 years of teaching experience. In the afternoon, 18 workshops—many led by TIME 2000 alumni—engaged attendees in fascinating, interactive experiences.

The alumni were in familiar territory. TIME 2000 majors begin participating in Celebrating Mathematics Teaching as freshmen. Markinson recalls guiding speakers around, assisting them, and speaking on student panels. She credits the yearly conference with cementing students’ sense of themselves as future math teachers. “They look around on Conference Day and they say, ‘Wow, look what I am a part of. I am a part of something tremendous and really special that people care a whole lot about.’”

The need for well-prepared math teachers is more acute than ever, especially with the decline in math skills among secondary students. However, though noting new challenges like the pandemic and artificial intelligence, Artzt takes an optimistic view of the future. “I know that TIME 2000 will react appropriately in a way that supports our students and is in touch with the needs of students in the schools,” she says. “I can say with 100 percent confidence that the program faculty are lifelong learners. Nobody is stagnant, everyone is looking to evolve . . . . every semester we’re tweaking things, changing things, adding things, making them meet the needs of learners in 2023 and 2024. That excites us. We see that as our mission so that when we send our TIME 2000 graduates on interviews and into the classrooms, they know what they have to do.”

Students participate in hands-on workshops.
A Hub for All That’s Jazz

The new Louis Armstrong Center houses the archives of its celebrated namesake, as well as exhibition and performance spaces.

Assembled on June 29, 2023, for the opening of the Louis Armstrong Center—part of the Louis Armstrong House Museum (LAHM) campus—are (from left) Community Board 3 Chair Frank Taylor, LAHM Board Chair Jay Hershenson, President Frank H. Wu, LAHM Executive Director Regina Bain, students Edimilson Garcia and Manuel Mejia, NYC Commissioner of Cultural Affairs Laurie Cumbo, State Senator Jessica Ramos, NYC Council Member Francisco Moya, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, CUNY Chancellor Felix Matos-Rodriguez, LAHM Board Members Larry Miller and Simona Chazen, and Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation Board Member Robin Bell-Stevens.

Insets at left: Richards; percussionist Joe Dyson and trumpeter Antoine Drye.

All photos by Andrew Kelly except as noted.
A visitor enjoying the “Here to Stay” exhibit.

Trumpeters (clockwise from bottom): Jon Faddis, Antoine Drye, Rafael Castillo, Summer Camargo, Kali Rodriguez, Waldron Ricks, Dave Adewumi, Riley Mulherkar, Linda Briceño, Steven Bernstein, Danny Jonokuchi, and Bria Skonberg.

Assembly Member Jeffrion Aubry

“Here to Stay” exhibit explores Armstrong’s career.

Horshoem and ASL Interpreter Brandon Kazen Maddox

Frank Sinatra High School for the Arts Jazz Ensemble.

A visitor enjoying the “Here to Stay” exhibit.

Armstrong Center architects Sara Caples and Everardo Jefferson.

Trumpeter Danny Jonokuchi and bassist Jen Hodge.

One of Armstrong’s instruments.

Bain

Moya

Hershenson and ASL Interpreter Brandon Kazen Maddox.

Assembly Member Jeffrion Aubry

Left: Motos-Rodriguez, Director of Research Collections Ricky Riccardi, and Wu.

Left: LAHMI Board Members Michele Stoddart and David Bodney; Ramos; Moya; Community Intern Raki Batista; Cumbo; Richards.

Trumpeters (clockwise from bottom): Jon Faddis, Antoine Drye, Rafael Castillo, Summer Camargo, Kali Rodriguez, Waldron Ricks, Dave Adewumi, Riley Mulherkar, Linda Briceño, Steven Bernstein, Danny Jonokuchi, and Bria Skonberg.

Left: Assembly Member Jeffrion Aubry.

“Here to Stay” exhibit explores Armstrong’s career.

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By Leslie Jay

Breaking New Academic Ground

CUNY Distinguished Professor of Sociology Pyong Gap Min made QC a center for the study of Koreans and Korean Americans

"Queens College has been the best of places for me. I enjoy conducting research on Asian Americans and there's a large Asian community in Flushing, which serves as a natural laboratory."

"Immigration and assimilation have changed American society," observes Pyong Gap Min, CUNY Distinguished Professor of Sociology. Min has had a similar impact on Queens College. The first faculty member to focus on Koreans and Korean Americans, he founded the Research Center for Korean Community (RCKC), which promotes research on Korean Americans and disseminates its data and information to the QC and Korean communities, as well as the Korean government. On a more personal note, in anticipation of his retirement in 2024, he established a scholarship in his name for a sociology student experiencing financial or family difficulties.

Min understands these issues all too well. He grew up in a rural Korean area where people had lots of children, losing many of them before they reached adulthood. "My parents had seven children; I was the only survivor," he says. "My mother died when I was eight. My father was a farmer who had only three to four months of education."

To attend high school, Min moved to Seoul. "I had no money," he recalls. "I slept in an unheated room, walked to school instead of taking a bus, and skipped lunch, which the school didn't supply. "While the other kids were eating, I walked around campus." The reward for his discipline: "I was accepted into the best university in Korea."

At Seoul National University, Min earned a bachelor's degree in history, supporting himself by tutoring high school students from rich families in English, in preparation for their college admission tests. He spent six months as a general reporter with the Korea Herald, an English-language newspaper, and two years teaching English in high schools and private academies before deciding to go back to school himself. "I wanted to be a scholar," he says. "I liked to study." Weighing options in the United States, he applied to the institution with the lowest tuition—Georgia State University—and was admitted.

In Atlanta, Min juggled minimum wage jobs and graduate school, earning a master’s degree in history and a PhD in educational philosophy. Unable to land a job, he completed a second PhD in sociology, becoming an instructor and a research associate at Georgia State. A tenure track position proved elusive. "The job market for sociology was terrible," he notes. "I submitted more than 100 applications." His sociology doctorate came from a brand-new program at Georgia State, which left him at a competitive disadvantage.

On the suggestion of a sympathetic committee member, Min applied for a National Science Foundation grant. In 1986, the NSF awarded him $78,000 to research "Some Positive Functions of Ethnic Business for an Immigrant Community: Korean Immigrants in Los Angeles," a project that strengthened his curriculum vitae. When QC's sociology department opened a search for an expert on Korean and Korean American history, Min was among the five candidates interviewed. "He was very active, had two PhDs and an NSF grant," reports Andrew Beveridge, sociology emeritus. "It was a no-brainer to hire him."

Andrew Beveridge, sociology emeritus, notes that breaking through a competitive disadvantage "was a no-brainer to hire him." Min, reports Beveridge, was "an NSF grant," and "He was very active, had two PhDs and an NSF grant," reports Andrew Beveridge, sociology emeritus. "It was a no-brainer to hire him."

Appointed an assistant professor in 1987 at age 45—"late," Min says—he advanced quickly. Within nine years, he was promoted to full professor; he established the RCKC, serving as its director, in 2009. The following year CUNY named him a distinguished professor. "Assembling his materials, it was plain that Min's work was recognized as seminal by a dozen international recognized scholars in Asian and Migration Studies who reviewed his work," comments Beveridge.

"I feel very lucky," says Min. "Queens College has been the best of places for me. I enjoy conducting research on Asian Americans and there's a large Asian community in Flushing, which serves as a natural laboratory." Exploring topics such as immigrant entrepreneurship, religious and ethnic identity, and redress for Korean "comfort women" enlaved in Japanese military brothels, he has written seven books, edited or co-edited 15 more, and released a steady stream of chapters, journal articles, and book reviews.

Not surprisingly, Min has accumulated honors and distinctions, including fellowships, book awards, a second NSF grant, and recognition from the New York City Comptroller's Office for his tremendous contributions to the city. In 2012 he was the first Asian American to receive the Distinguished Career Award from the International Migration Section of the American Sociological Association. Five years later, the government of Korea gave him the Presidential Award. He was recently nominated for membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

For Min, retirement represents just another phase in a remarkable career. "I cannot stop doing research," he declares. "I get up at six in the morning, goes to the park, and regularly plays tennis. "You have to continue your work to be healthy, and you have to keep healthy to be able to contribute." He hopes he'll be succeeded at the RCKC by another immigrant Korean sociologist, whom he can assist by getting grants, collecting donations, and inviting visiting scholars from Korea. His next book will tackle a subject he knows intimately: He plans to write his autobiography.
Alum Blazes Own Trail Publishing Black-Centered Comics

Keeping Control of His Company, Manuel Godoy ’17 Rejects Shark Tank Offer

By Bob Suter

When Manuel Godoy ’17 and his spouse Geiszel walked onto the set to face the “shark” investors on ABC’s “Shark Tank” show in January 2022, it appeared that all the stars were in alignment for the couple to move forward with their dream to turn their company, Black Sands Entertainment, into a dominant purveyor of comic books, graphic novels, video games, and animation grounded in a Black-centered appreciation of history before colonialism.

Appraising that evening as a “guest shark” was the comic actor and entrepreneur Kevin Hart, one of three people Manuel Godoy has said he most admires for their savvy in marketing, managing, and continuing to own their intellectual property—the others being filmmakers Tyler Perry and George Lucas. As Godoy had anticipated since learning two weeks prior of Hart’s appearance, the comedian was very interested in what he had to pitch.

Offers and counter-offers ensued, the Godoys walked away with a tentative deal in which Hart and fellow shark Mark Cuban would receive an equity stake in Black Sands Entertainment. In return, Hart’s Hartbeat media company would offer its considerable resources to help Black Sands expand its portfolio of offerings, grow their distribution, and possibly move into film, television, and video game production.

But the partnership was not to be. Negotiations ended, with Manuel Godoy recently telling Birmingham Christian Family Magazine, “It just wasn’t for us. There’s a lot of red tape with celebrities... It had to be either-or, and we had to go with what we already knew.”

What Manuel Godoy knew was that there was an audience for what he and Geiszel had to offer, an audience they considered themselves part of: African Americans looking for works of historic fiction that feature Black characters but don’t involve slavery or the civil rights movement. Works that parents of pre-teens like the Godoys would be happy to have their children read.

The original “Black Sands” comic is set in ancient Egypt, an Egyptian according to tribal and Black history research, was populated by far more Black people than has been depicted in the Eurocentric creations experienced by generations of moviegoers. It follows the adventures of a young Black boy, Ausrur, who wants to prove to his grandfather that he has what it takes to become pharaoh.

In a February 2022 appearance on “The Breakfast Club” radio show (105.1 FM in NYC) and podcast, the Godoys explained how Manuel’s original ambition to create a “Black Sands” video game was undone by the prohibitive amount it would cost to produce: “So, I was like, ‘Let’s pivot. Let’s make a comic book off of the same series.’ Then we went to Kickstarter and raised $20,000 off of a $4,000 Kickstarter. ‘The rest was history.’ In 2017 Manuel opened a kiosk in a mall in Hoover, Alabama, to sell the original “Black Sands” comic book. He sold $3,000 worth at the kiosk while during the same period he sold $45,000 online at Shopify. Clearly, online merchandizing was the way to go. It was also where Manuel could leverage his social media savvy to build a fan base. As he told “The Breakfast Club,” “‘Online you know who your audience is and you can start laser focusing on them with your marketing strategy’

As CEO of a company he created, Manuel Godoy is plainly proud of the independence he continues to enjoy. (Geiszel is CFO.) He has used online platforms, principally Patreon, to raise capital from small investors to sustain and grow Black Sands Entertainment.

Launching a new publishing genre: Manuel and Geiszel Godoy, founders of Black Sands Entertainment.

As of June 2023, the website wefunder.com reported Black Sands had raised $219,771 from 5,126 investors. In 2021, the company did more than $2 million in sales continuing to issue titles under the Black Sands brand featuring Black characters in historical settings before the advent of European colonialism. A departure from that formula are titles written by Geiszel called “Mort’s Family Adventures” and “Incola.”

As Manuel explained on “The Breakfast Club,” he hoped to avoid the pitfalls experienced by Milestone, an earlier Black-owned publisher of comics with Black superhero figures: “Mastodon did some things that were great, but they didn’t have the tools that are available to us today. They didn’t have the social media platforms to literally build their own audience, because if they did, they probably would have made different choices.” One choice, to broaden their audience by becoming part of powerhouse DC Comics, ultimately led to Milestone’s demise: DC killed the brand for failing to meet anticipated sales figures.

That historic failure may have contributed to the decision to walk away from the “Shark Tank” deal, as Manuel explained in a phone interview from his home in Delaware: “The main thing was just simply control. At the end of the day, you give up a lot of control with these ‘Shark Tank’ deals. Of all the major causes that were deal-breakers for us was that I couldn’t raise capital through my fans anymore... I’m not trading in my freedom for the chance of success.”

By his standards, Manuel Godoy already is a success, ticking off the capital he’s been able to raise through investments and sales and projects he has in the pipeline, which include an anime deal with Carl Reed and Composition Media and production of the video game he’s always wanted to create. “I can afford it now. I might be able to get an Xbox distribution deal to go with it... I’m pretty comfortable.”

Manuel, who grew up in Kew Gardens and Flushing, attributes his success in large part to his education at Queens College, where he earned a B.A in Economics. “My years of studying economics have brought me to think of everything as supply versus demand... I didn’t have an internship or anything. I learned most of what I know about finance and business administration through college, and that was it.”

Education, specifically the education of middle schoolers, is an area where the Godoys have been making inroads with a deal to sell their publications to Birmingham public schools. Manuel also mentioned a recent conversation with a librarian who was ordering books for public libraries in three New York City boroughs. Parents, Manuel told “The Breakfast Club,” complain their children aren’t reading enough. With our publications, he says, “You can get them interested in reading first, and then you give them Charlotte’s Web.”

“I just wasn’t for us... It had to be either-or, and we had to go with what we already knew.”

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A Lifetime of Service

By John Scarinci

In the summer of 1969, just 10 days after returning to his Bayside home from Vietnam, wounded veteran Dominick Yezzo visited the registrar at Queens College, hoping to get a fresh start on life. “Queens College looked to me like a real university,” recalled Yezzo. “It had a fence around it. It was surrounded by a community. There were trees on it. It had those old tile roof buildings. I understood that something university-like went on there. I wanted to be part of that.”

Yezzo didn’t have the academic credentials to be accepted—he had a 73 average in high school—but upon learning that he had just returned from war, a kindly woman at the registrar admitted him on the spot.

“It was a very significant moment in my life,” said Yezzo. “It began with an understanding, a willingness to accept me. There was a deeply rooted will and patience with me from the administration. I received a lot of broader ranges of duty and citizenship.”

A year earlier, Yezzo had been on his way to Vietnam. The Army drafted him at the height of the war, when each month, 19,000 young men from New York State alone were being sent to fight. The furthest he had been from home was a weekend trip to Boston; at the age of 21, he was traveling 8,500 miles away to Southeast Asia.

Ten days into his tour, Yezzo was critically wounded by a grenade explosion. He was medevacked by helicopter to a field base and stabilized, but doctors could not remove shrapnel from his right shoulder. After recuperating on the USS Repose, a U.S. Navy hospital ship stationed off the coast of the South China Sea, he was sent back to his unit. He spent the rest of his tour in constant fear, surviving regular mortar attacks and a firefight, witnessing the deaths of fellow soldiers as well as Vietnamese civilians, and recording it in his journal.

“I started to write a journal because I thought the possibility that I could die was real,” he commented. “You understand early on that you’re in a condition where life and death are the chief tension. Nobody lives like that here. In war, that’s how it is.”

Yezzo arrived home on August 17, 1969, the third day of the Woodstock Music Festival in upstate New York. While nearly 500,000 people were promoting peace and love, he struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), ringworm, and a damaged shoulder. His mother helped him to pick up the pieces.

“She sat beside me at the kitchen table, held me tight, and said ‘Wash your face, comb your hair, and go to work. Control what you can control.’ It was the best advice I’ve ever been given my entire life,” said Yezzo.

His mother also read his journal, getting an understanding of what he endured in Vietnam. She mentioned the journal to a family friend who happened to be a writer for the Daily News. Her friend helped Yezzo get the journal in the hands of publishers. Released in 1974 and reviewed by the New York Times, A GI’s Vietnam Diary sold out its first printing and went into a second.

“The irony was that I was in remedial English at Queens, and the book was published and reviewed in the New York Times,” observed Yezzo, who improved his English grades and majored in English literature. “I didn’t realize literature was taking a hold of me. . . . I had no skills, but most of the teachers were patient with me. I really have a good undergraduate degree at Queens College. It’s a basis for a lot of broader ranges of duty and citizenship.”

Upon receiving his BA, he enrolled in a graduate program in language and literature at City College. Before he completed his master’s in 1980, he was teaching literature at Nassau Community College, where he became a full-time lecturer—a position he still holds.

Ready for yet another challenge, Yezzo applied to and was accepted at CUNY School of Law.

“It was that same hidden dream,” he said. “That attempt at something unavailable to persons like me. There was more to do. I always enjoyed the law.”

Balancing law school while teaching a full course load at Nassau, Yezzo earned his JD in public interest law in 1988. Three years later, he opened a private practice specializing in personal injury. Highly successful, he maintained his practice until 2009, when he turned his attention to law in the service of human need—public interest law. He became a law judge for New York City’s Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). An executive agency independent of the state court system, OATH holds hearings on summonses and administrative trials issued by various city agencies; Yezzo is still employed there today.

“Not that we are soft on crime, but we certainly don’t want to leave [incarcerated veterans] behind,” explained Yezzo. “Post-traumatic stress caused these people to be unable to reason properly, and they are of value to the prison system. . . . They are carrying with them, in many cases, an awful burden. Once you’ve been in a war and experienced the destruction of people and property, you’re likely to struggle with the results of that in a human way. The results are profound, even if we don’t admit it to ourselves. PTSD is never gone. I still struggle. If you don’t have the support that I had when I came home, which is a family and people who honored your service, you can be bitten by it—as soon as it happens or many years later.”

Reflecting on his life and what he has accomplished, Yezzo remains grateful to the institution that took a chance on a veteran many years ago, helping him become a writer, professor, lawyer, judge, and humanitarian. “I praise Queens and the administration who were patient enough to let me develop the skills I needed to become a successful student,” he concluded. “I honor QC first because QC honored me.”

Yezzo never forgot about his time in Vietnam. Since 1980, he has volunteered with the Vietnam Veterans of America, a nonprofit that promotes and supports the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans. He is also the chair of Veterans Incarcerated and in the Judicial System, which serves imprisoned veterans and veterans in treatment courts who suffer from PTSD and TBI. Yezzo advocates on their behalf with prison administrators, wardens, judges, and district attorneys in 50 states and develops strategies to help vets afflicted by hidden conditions.

“It was time for me to return what I had gotten back to the community,” he noted. “Life was running on me, and I wanted to do more with my degree. I have a degree in public interest law, and my work now is solely in public interest.”

Opposite page: Dominick Yezzo, then and now, saved his uniform. Above: In the spring, he went to Douglas City Jail in Omaha, Nebraska, to visit incarcerated veterans.
In these pages, we celebrate the lives and achievements of members of the Queens College community who passed away.

Kenneth Abrams
Kenneth Abrams, former member of the QC English faculty, died in August 2023. He was 94. Abrams devoted his entire career to public New York City schools. After teaching at QC and SUNY Stony Brook, he became part of the team that founded Empire State College in Saratoga in 1971. He stayed there for 35 years, retiring as Empire’s dean for international programs. Abrams was remembered for his love of horse racing. Wordworth, animals, food and wine, students, colleagues, friends, and relatives, and his dedication to progressive education and social justice causes.

Elaine Alberts ’70 MS, ’72 MSEd
Elaine Alberts, an elementary school teacher dedicated to environmental education, passed away in March 2023 at the age of 87. A long-time student while raising two children, Alberts attended Queens College for a total of 13 years. She found her niche at PS 120 in Queens, teaching fifth grade and science. She won recognition from the Garden Club of America for excellence in environmental education and participated in Sony Corporation’s expert teacher exchange in Japan. Her influence extended beyond her own classroom as, with colleagues from the Thomas J. Watson Ecology Workshop, she co-founded the Alley Pond Environmental Center in her basement.

Jeffrey Arnstein
Jeffrey Arnstein, an antiques restorer whose clientele included the Christie’s and Sotheby’s auction houses, died in July 2022. He was 75. Arnstein attended QC on a scholarship, majoring in anthropology and biology. He taught University of Michigan faculty member Eric Bermann ’56
Eric Bermann’s University of Michigan faculty member Eric Bermann passed away in June 2023. He was 88. A psychology major at QC, Bermann completed master’s and doctoral degrees in personality and clinical psychology at the University of Michigan, and subsequently a master’s in public health. He spent decades at the university, teaching in the psychology and psychiatry departments, and chairing the graduate program in clinical psychology. In addition to his academic responsibilities, he was chief psychologist for the Children’s Psychiatric Hospital at Michigan Medical Center and as a consultant he was a widely admired work for institutions such as the Wadhows Athenenium Museum of Art and the Old State House. Remarkably, he was colorblind; his apprentices helped him achieve the correct color tones.

Hanacho Atako ’53
Prince Job Hanacho Atako, a social worker and manager in agencies affiliated with New York City’s Department of Social Services, died in August 2023. He was 94. Born to a royal family in Diobu, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Atako immigrated to the United States in 1948 to pursue his education. After graduating from QC, where he excelled in soccer, he earned master’s degrees from New York University and Columbia University. He spent 30 years in social services; at his death in 1994, he was deputy director of protective services for adults in the New York City Human Resources Administration.

Stevanne Stockheim Auerbach ’60
Stevanne Stockheim Auerbach, widely known as “Dr. Toy,” passed away in October 2022 at the age of 84. Auerbach majored in education at Queens College and earned her early elementary school for the New York City Department of Education. Moving to Maryland, she earned an MA in special education at George Washington University. With less than five years’ experience, she completed a doctorate in child development at Union Institute and University and founded the San Francisco International Toy Museum, which was visited by more than 50,000 children in its four years of operation. Having established herself as an expert on toys, Auerbach wrote books, advice columns, and reviews. A set of her papers and materials has been given to the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at the Strong Museum of Play in Rochester, New York.

John Behrens ’66
John Behrens, who spent 35 years at Queens College, teaching physics and heading the physics labs, died in July 2023. He was 92. Behrens began working at the college after graduating from Westchester Community College and serving four years in the Air Force as an airplane and engine mechanic stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi. His love of physics led him to the love of his life, QC Physics Professor Joan Demerest. They married and settled in Dix Hills, raising two daughters. In retirement, Behrens and Demerest moved upstairs to Skaneateles, where he gardened, played golf, and took daily walks with their two chocolate Labrador retrievers.

Francis Brancalone ’79 MA
Scholar, pianist, and music critic Francis Brancalone, professor emeritus at Manhattanville College, died in February 2023. He was 86. An alumni of QC and Manhattan School of Music, Queens College, and the Graduate School at CUNY—where he earned his doctorate—Brancalone had a diversified career. He taught at Manhattanville for 40 years, serving as the college’s organist for much of that time. He gave solo piano recitals at Town Hall and Tully Hall and performed concerts with orchestras, including the Detroit Symphony; his repertoire extended from Baroque music to contemporary compositions. As music critic for Gannett’s Journal News, he wrote more than 500 reviews.

Ernesto Castillo BA ’03, MA ’10
César Castillo BA, ’10, MA César Castillo, chief Biology lab technician and adjunct faculty member, passed away in March 2023. Castillo, who immigrated to New York as a child, credited Queens College with reawakening the love of nature that his grandmother nurtured in him in his native Colombia. He was celebrated on campus and beyond as a botanist. NYU ARC Hudson director who enjoyed helping everyone—particularly people from underserved and diverse New York City communities—appreciate the world around them. Mexican and student with low vision, recalled that he enabled her to see hummingbirds for the first time, feeding in a patch of jewelled rose. Chin-Hong (Biology) noted that in’ 2019 Castillo completed his PhD. In botany for the most observed bird species in both New York City and New York State. A lifelong learner, Castillo met his wife, Wendy, at a class on ornithology.

Pricilla Cicciariello BA ’73, MLS ’74
Pricilla Cicciariello died in January 2023 at the age of 97. Cicciariello enjoyed a 25-year career at the Port Washington Library, serving as its head of reference for a decade, retiring in 1993. She also chaired the American Library Association’s Reference and History Section. Cicciariello was known for her efforts on behalf of people who have Marfan syndrome, a genetic disorder that affected her husband and members of their family. She co-founded the National Marfan Foundation, and served on the Board of Directors of the Marfan Syndrome Organizations, founded the Coalition for Heritable Disorders of Connective Tissue, and was appointed to the National Advisory Council for the National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal, and Skin Diseases by U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala.

Charles Crawford
Charles Crawford, a physical education teacher at Queens College, passed away in August 2023. Born in Pittsburgh, Crawford grew up in Queens Village and attended Xavier High School, where he was on the varsity football, basketball, and baseball teams. He went on to earn a bachelor’s degree at Manhattan College, a master’s degree from the University of Maryland, and a doctorate in education from New York University. In 1967 he succeeded Robert Salmons of QC as coach of the men’s basketball team, a position he would hold through 1976. Retiring to Cape Cod, he played and umpired softball.

Lisa Delange MLS ’04
Lisa Delange, a lecturer in culinary arts at Kingsborough Community College (KCC), passed away in February 2023. She was 52. “Librarian or Chef Instructor . . . why choose?!” Delange noted on her LinkedIn entry. She held a BA in English from Barnard University, an AOS in Culinary Arts from the Culinary Institute of America, a BS in Hospitality Management from Florida International University, an MA in Food Studies from New York University, and an MLS from Queens College. Before the KCC faculty in 2012, Delange taught at the Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation, New York University, and Johnson and Wales University in Miami, and was a researcher and writer for the Food Network. She also worked as a young adult librarian in Rye and Mamaroneck and as an outreach librarian for MyLibraryNYC, which expands student and teacher access to books in the city’s public library system.

Constance Diamond
Artist and educator Constance Diamond passed away on July 26, 2023. She was 75. Diamond received her BFA from New York University and Queens College, Diamond returned to NYU for a doctorate in arts. In addition to teaching at Nassau Community College and at Empire State College campuses in Manhattan and Hauppauge, she showed her work in and around New York City and founded a collective art studio.

Alan Eysen ’52
Award-winning journalist Alan Eysen died in February 2023. He was 91. Eysen earned a B.A. in psychology at QC, followed by a master’s of journalism at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1961, he returned to New York, working at daily and weekly newspapers, joining Newsday in 1967. Affiliated with it for 32 years in different capacities—political reporter, editor, and columnist—he was part of a team that spent three years investigating the misuse of political and public offices on Long Island. The ensuing articles won Newsday the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service in 1970, among other honors. Subsequently, Eysen taught investigative journalism at Stonybrook University, Hofstra University, and LIU Post College (formerly the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University), and served as a political consultant.
Alexander Kouguell, professor emeritus of music and Aaron Copland School of Music (ACSM) benefactor, died in October 2022. He was 102.

Born in Russia, Kouguell graduated from the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris and then majored in comparative literature at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. After doctoral studies at Columbia University, he taught for a year at the Peabody Conservatory of Music at the same time serving as conductor of the Peabody Chamber Orchestra. He then became principal cellist of the National Orchestral Association, the Musica Aeterna Orchestra, and the Clarion Music Society of New York. He also joined Queens College’s music department, where he would teach for nearly seven decades, returning as an adjunct following his retirement.

As a performer, Kouguell toured extensively in the United States, Europe, and the Near and Middle East, his travels enriched by his command of Russian, French, and Arabic. He recorded for the Columbia, Decca, Monitor, Nonesuch, and CRI labels.

Dedicated to the college and the Aaron Copland School of Music, he established, with his wife, 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. Subsequently, he gave all his cellos, bows, music, and memorabilia to ACSM, accompanied by a generous donation.

Jack Herschlag ’53

Writer, entrepreneur, and sports promoter Jack Herschlag died in July 2023 at the age of 91. At Queens College, Herschlag majored in English and minored in education, inducted in the U.S. Army upon graduation, he was sent to Korea as a high-speed radio operator. Demobilized, he was first a reporter and editor at Women's Wear Daily and then advertising manager for the film division at Walt Disney. Leveraging his skills in fashion and advertising, he moved over to the National Association of Men's Sportswear Buyers, which held semi-annual trade shows in New York City. He would stay with the association for 35 years, retiring as its executive director in 2004. Herschlag also took on numerous entrepreneurial ventures, from co-authoring books to developing Halfcourt Basketball, Inc. with the help of Naomi Memorial Basketball Hall of Famer Rick Barry. Halfcourt Basketball promoted three-on-three tournaments in dozens of U.S. cities, leading to the eventual debut of full-on-three basketball as an Olympic sport.

Alan Hewes ’62

Politician Alan Hewes, a QC political science professor who reached statewide office before resigning in disgrace, died on November 9. He was 83. First elected to the state assembly in 1971, Hewes represented Forest Hills for nearly 20 years; he supported Medicaid funding for abortions, barred hospitals from turning away indigent New Yorkers, and fought against the return of the death penalty. He next became New York city comptroller. In collaboration with state officials across the country, he achieved a settlement in which Swiss banks had to pay $1.25 billion in restitution to Holocaust survivors. In 2002 Hewes won his first term as state comptroller. Re-elected, he stepped down shortly afterward, admitting that he had illegally delegated personal errands—such as chauffeuring his ailing wife—to state employees. Subsequently, he was sentenced to prison for corruption: in return for $1 million in gifts and campaign donations, he directed state pension fund investments to financier Elliott Broidy.

Andrew Kampiziones ’63

Banker turned educator Andrew Kampiziones passed away in February 2023 at the age of 91. Kampiziones taught teachers college and did much to promote Greek culture in his native Greece before marrying and moving with his wife to New York. Employed in the banking industry, he earned a second college degree at QC, majoring in economics. Subsequently, he settled in Florence, South Carolina. Returning to school one more time, Kampiziones earned a master’s in philosophy at the University of South Carolina and joined the faculties of Francis Marion University and Florence-Darlington Technical College. An advocate for the arts in general and Greek culture in particular, he held seats on the boards of the Florence Symphony and the Florence Museum and was appointed to multiple civic committees. This devotion to public service earned Kampiziones the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which recognizes Americans who have worked for the betterment of the United States and its citizens, and the Order of the Palmetto, the highest recognition bestowed on a civilian by the State of South Carolina.

Elaine Kaplan ’55

Elaine Kaplan, an elementary school teacher turned Bowling Green dean, passed away in April 2023. She was 88. Upon graduating from Queens College, Kaplan taught third grade in New York City schools. While remaining in the classroom and raising her three boys on Long Island, she earned a PhD from Hofstra University. Her career took...
Barbara Lane
Art Professor Emerita Barbara Lane, longtime chair of the Art Department at Queens College, passed away in September 2023. A scholar of Early Dutch, Northern Renaissance, and Medieval art, Lane taught at the University of Maryland and at Rutgers University before joining the CUNY faculty in 1979. In 2000 she was elected to the Faculty of The Graduate Center. Renowned for her work on Hans Memling, "Memling Master," she retired in 2010 after serving more than three dozen essays and book chapters, exploring topics such as the art of the Netherlands, the art of Germany, and the altarpiece. She was deeply committed to CUNY and its students, and was known for her generosity, her kind and caring nature, and her dedication to education. She was a trailblazer for women in academia and will be missed by many who knew her.

Lockwood-Gibbs earned an MA in Political Science/Public Policy Administration from Queens College, receiving merit recognition for her work. She has presented at national conferences and guest-lectured at OT programs at Columbia University, SUNY Downstate, and Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Lockwood-Gibbs held positions at Goldwater Memorial Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital, and Downstate Medical Center/SUNY University at Stony Brook. Lockwood-Gibbs is survived by her husband, Thomas, and their two children, James and Samantha.

Brenda Lockwood-Gibbs
Brenda Lockwood-Gibbs held positions at Goldwater Memorial Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital, and Downstate Medical Center/SUNY University Hospital of Brooklyn, serving as its OT director from 1975 until her retirement two decades later. Thereafter, she spent 18 years as an occupational therapist with the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Lockwood-Gibbs earned an MA in Political Science/Public Policy Administration from Queens College, receiving merit recognition for her work. She has presented at national conferences and guest-lectured at OT programs at Columbia University, SUNY Downstate, and Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Lockwood-Gibbs held positions at Goldwater Memorial Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital, and Downstate Medical Center/SUNY University at Stony Brook. Lockwood-Gibbs is survived by her husband, Thomas, and their two children, James and Samantha.

Sonia Handelman Meyer
Sonia Handelman Meyer, a photographer with work in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Jewish Museum in New York, died in September 2022. She was 102. An English major at QC, she first picked up a camera after college, while stationed in Puerto Rico as a civilian employed by the Army Signal Corps. Coming back to New York, she studied at the Photo League, a cooperative that saw photography as a means to change the world, and answered the photos as its secretary. The league shut down after World War II, and Meyer went to work for the Red Cross as a biomedical engineer Jerome Meyer, packed up her photographs and negatives and reinvented her career, taking less controversial jobs in publishing and photography. At 87, she was living in Charlotte, North Carolina, when she saw her photo of the Weavers, a folk music quartet, used without credit on a postcard. Trying and failing to get the error corrected, her son brought examples of Meyer’s work to a local gallery—which gave her a show in 2007 and sold many of her pictures at $500 apiece.

Ralph Molé
Ralph Molé, an award-winning producer of sports programming, passed away in October 2022. He was 78. Molé was born in Brooklyn, raised in New York. He served as a spokesperson on matters pertaining to New York federal policy. Additionally, the bank’s board of directors appointed him corporate secretary, recognizing his significant contributions to the organization. Molé dedicated several years to teaching macroeconomics at his alma mater, and his classes were immensely popular. He possessed a deep knowledge of the economics literature, drawing in students from professional experience, and had a wonderful sense of humor. An exceptional athlete, Malin had a deep passion for baseball, supporting the QC team after his graduation and coaching the college team of the Long Island Astros.

Steven Melnich
Steven Melnich ’72, MA ’73 QC faculty member and alumnus Steven Melnich completed his Master of Fine Arts degree in photography at CUNY. From 1990 to 2007, he was a senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. He served as a spokesman on matters pertaining to New York federal policy. Additionally, the bank’s board of directors appointed him corporate secretary, recognizing his significant contributions to the organization. Melnich dedicated several years to teaching macroeconomics at his alma mater, and his classes were immensely popular. He possessed a deep knowledge of the economics literature, drawing in students from professional experience, and had a wonderful sense of humor. An exceptional athlete, Malin had a deep passion for baseball, supporting the QC team after his graduation and coaching the college team of the Long Island Astros.

Charles Molesworth
Charles Molesworth, a member of the English faculty for 40 years, died in May 2023. Molesworth taught at Queens College from 1974 to 1985, and from 1985 to 1995 chaired the history department. In 1995 he returned to QC, where he remained until his retirement in 2012. During his time at QC, Molesworth was the director of the English Ph.D. program. He also served as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and as the provost of the University. Molesworth was a leader in the field of medieval and renaissance literature, and his research focused on the relationship of Roger Fry, J. P. Morgan, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Molesworth was also the author of many articles on the visual arts and art history. He was a member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s advisory board, and a multiple-time chair of the English Department in the 1980s and 1990s. He was a passionate advocate for the arts, and his legacy continues to be felt at Queens College and throughout the CUNY system.

Barbara Jones Omolade
Barbara Jones Omolade ’64 Sociologist and educator Barbara Jones Omolade passed away in July 2023 at the age of 80. After graduating from Queens College, Omolade earned a master’s degree from Harvard University and a doctorate from the City University of New York. An activist from her student days, she participated in the Mississippi Summer Freedom Project and was a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Turning her beliefs into a career, Omolade worked for the Center for the Elimination of Violence in the Family, the Women’s Action Alliance, Empire State College Center for Labor Studies, CUNY, and the City College of New York for Worker Education. Moving to the Midwest, she became the first dean of Multicultural Affairs at Calvin College—now Calvin University. Her books include The Rising Song of African American Women, It’s a Family Affair: The Real Lives of Black Single Mothers, and Pressure Cooks: Black Women and Social Change.

Grace Marie Robbins
Grace Marie Robbins, an alumnus whose marriage to novelist Harold Robbins made her a celebrity in her own right, died in July 2023. She was 91. Robbins, nee Palermo, was a casting director at Gray Advertising when she met her future husband. They exchanged vows—for the first time, for the second—moved to the house they built and eventually took up singing and, after the end of her marriage, writing, releasing the memoir Cinderella and the Carpenters' Singer, My Life as the Wife of the World's Best-Selling Author, Harold Robbins (the title referenced one of her ex’s most popular potboilers, The Carpenters' Singer).

Constance Wain Schwartz
Constance Wain Schwartz ’71 Artist, art teacher, and art therapist Constance Wain Schwartz passed away in October 2022. She was 91. Schwartz honed her creative talents at Pratt Institute, the Art Students League, and Hunter College before leaving school to get married and raise a family. Settling in Huntington Township, New York, she found time to illustrate books and posters for local organizations that supported human rights. Enrolling at QC after her youngest child started school, Schwartz completed two bachelor’s degrees in Fine Art and Art History, all at levels ranging from K-12 to the School of Visual Arts, Hofstra, and Udon Center for the Arts. She particularly enjoyed serving as the art instructor for the Town of Huntington’s Senior Division. Schwartz earned an MFA in Printmaking from C.W. Post and, in that medium and others, was exhibited in solo and group shows, winning rave reviews in the New York Times and Newsday. Interested in the healing values of art, she became a registered art therapist, working with individuals and groups and traveling to China as part of an art therapy delegation.
Lois Schwaebel ‘56
Lois Schwaebel, former director of legal services at the Safe Center Long Island, died in June 2023. She was 87. Finishing high school at age 16 and college at 20, Schwaebel briefly taught in Lower East Side schools before marrying and becoming a full-time homemaker. Once her youngest child graduated from high school, she too took volunteering at the Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the precursor of the Safe Center. She founded the work so compelling that in middle age she went to law school, came back to the organization as an attorney, and later oversaw its transition into the Safe Center. Dedicated to public service, she was a member of the Nassau County Executive’s Family Violence Task Force, Nassau County’s Judicial Women in the Courts Committee, the Nassau County Bar Association’s We Care Fund Advisory Board, and the County’s Judicial Women in the Courts Committee, the Nassau County Executive’s Family Violence Task Force, Nassau County’s Judicial Women in the Courts Committee, the Nassau County Executive’s Family Violence Task Force.

In 2001, nine years after her retirement, Sung teamed up with immigrant and City College alumnus Tom Tan, the first Chinese American to serve as a CUNY trustee, to found AAARI. She later established a $100,000 endowed fund at CUNY for AAARI to host a research fund on Asian American topics.

“Betty Lee Sung was a giant,” said President Frank H. Wu. “She did so much for Asian American Studies. She is among the heroes in the field whom we need to remember.”

Donald Snyder ’08
Print, radio, and TV journalist Donald Snyder died in July 2023, two days after filing his last story. He was 90. Upon graduating from QC, Snyder briefly worked as a copy editor at Newsday days after filing his last story. He was 90. Upon graduating from QC, Snyder briefly worked as a copy editor at Newsday, later becoming a news producer for Mutual Broadcasting System’s Berlin bureau from 1970 to 1973. Snyder briefly worked as a copy editor at Newsday. Then he went to Harvard University, receiving an MA and PhD in Far Eastern Languages (now East Asian Languages). He held positions as a research assistant on the Harvard-Yenching Institute Chinese-English dictionary project and a Fulbright Research Fellow at Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana before joining the faculty of the State University of New York at New Paltz. In 1962, Solomon arrived at QC. Over the next 25 years, he taught modern and classical Chinese language, literature, and civilization, and founded the programs in Chinese and East Asian Studies. His scholarly works include The Veritable Record of the T’ang Emperor Shou-tsung and On the School of Names in Ancient China. He was also co-editor of The Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms by Su-ma Kuang.

Rebecca Shareah Taleghani
Rebecca Shareah Taleghani, a professor in the Department of Classical, Middle Eastern, and Asian Languages and Cultures, passed away in September 2023. Taleghani held a bachelor’s degree in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master’s and doctorate in early and Islamic studies from New York University. Joining the QC faculty in fall 2014 after a year in the Middle East and North Africa, among other classes. At the CUNY Graduate Center, she led courses on dissent and exile in the literature of the Middle East and North Africa. Taleghani is remembered as an advocate for political dissidents and rescue animals. Her cat Zibbad was known to make cameo appearances during online classes.

Robert Trotman
Robert Trotman, a QC alumnus who led Nu-Finmen Swimming, preparing children from diverse backgrounds to swim competitively, passed away in March 2023. He was 82. After leaving to swim at a club in the Bronx, Trotman became the first Black swim team captain at the borough’s DeWitt Clinton High School and competed in meets through the Amateur Athletic Union. In 1959, and his friend Charles Simmons launched Finmen at a recreation center in Brooklyn. After military service, Trotman returned to New York. He attended QC for two years and expanded on Finmen, which for years operated out of Hempstead, Long Island, and is now based in California. Trotman trained athletes to become all-state swimmers, NCAA All-Americans, and Junior Olympic champions, among other distinctions. Trotman’s success in introducing his sport to members of underrepresented groups, USA Swimming, which administers competitive swimming and selects the Olympic team, gave him the Diversity & Inclusion Award in 2014.

Joseph Tufariello ’57
Joseph Tufariello, chemistry professor emeritus at the University at Buffalo SUNY, passed away in November 2022. He was 87. Tufariello earned a bachelor’s degree from Queens College followed by a PhD in organic chemistry at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He enjoyed a long and distinguished teaching career at SUNY Buffalo, eventually chairing its chemistry department. The Buffalo News reports that during his tenure, research expenditures doubled from $1.6 million to $3.6 million and the department achieved notable success in obtaining grants from non-government sources. In subsequent positions, Tufariello served as dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics—among the largest programs at the creation of the Natural Sciences Complex on campus—and senior vice provost for educational technology. In retirement, he indulged his interests in bicycling, nature walks, crossword puzzles, and rooting for his beloved New York Yankees.

Betty Lee Sung ’68
Betty Lee Sung, founder of City College’s Asian American Studies program and co-founder of CUNY’s Asian American/Asian Research Institute (AAARI), died in January 2023. She was 98. The future scholar, née Betty Lee, was born in Washington, D.C., to an immigrant couple who ran a laundry out of their home. Her father was a so-called “paper son” who had bought documents identifying him as a blood relative of a Chinese individual with U.S. residency or citizenship. Struggling in the Depression, the family moved to China, where Lee’s mother and one child died. The five surviving members of the family eventually regrouped in the United States, Lee and two of her siblings fleeing China just ahead of the Japanese invasion.

Attending the University of Illinois on a scholarship, Lee majored in sociology and economics. After graduation, she married her classmate Hui Yuan Sung. They settled in New York, where she researched and wrote Chinese-language scripts for the Voice of America (VOA); based on in that work, she published her first book, Mountain of Gold: The Story of the Chinese in America. Subsequently, while employed at the Queens Public Library, she completed an MLS from Queens College. That resume prompted City College to put Sung on its faculty in 1970, she earned a PhD at CUNY a dozen years later. During and after her doctoral studies, she released a series of books illuminating the experience of Chinese immigrants and their children.

In 2001, nine years after her retirement, Sung teamed up with immigrant and City College alumnus Tom Tan, the first Chinese American to serve as a CUNY trustee, to found AAARI. She later established a $100,000 endowed fund at CUNY for AAARI to host a research fund on Asian American topics.

“Betty Lee Sung was a giant,” said President Frank H. Wu. “She did so much for Asian American Studies. She is among the heroes in the field whom we need to remember.”

Richard Whalen ’57
Journalist and presidential consultant Richard Whalen died in July 2023 at the age of 87. An English and political science major at QC, where he met his wife, Whalen hit the fast track after graduation: in five years he landed staff positions at the Richmond News Leader in Virginia, Time magazine, the Wall Street Journal, and Fortune magazine. His epic Fortune profile of Joseph Kennedy, researched without the cooperation of the subject or his family, became a best-selling book—The Founding Father—and changed the course of Whalen’s career. He joined a DC-area think tank, wrote speeches for Richard Nixon, breaking with him bitterly, and served more happily as an advisor to Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Frederick Wolfe ’58
Frederick Wolfe, a rheumatologist celebrated for his work in identifying fibromyalgia—a chronic disorder that causes musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, and other issues—died in September 2023. He was 87. After graduating from Queens College, Wolfe earned a medical degree from the State University of New York, and served two years in the U.S. Air Force. SETtling in Kansas, he established the Wichita Arbiter Center and became a clinical professor of internal medicine at the University of Kansas, Lawrence. Analyzing serological records before that was common, he collected data from his clinic and others for research purposes; he’s credited as the lead or co-author of hundreds of peer-reviewed papers. In 1987, he brought together 20 rheumatologists to define the group of symptoms that would become known as fibromyalgia. He would continue studying the condition for the rest of his life. Wolfe enjoyed amateur radio, gardening, cooking, and bicycling, repeatedly crossing his home state with Bicycling Across Kansas.

City College of New York, found his calling by serving in the Army Cavalry Corps. He enrolled in the Army Language Training Institute in Chinese and afterwards began graduate studies. Then he went to Harvard University, receiving an MA and PhD in Far Eastern Languages (now East Asian Languages). He held positions as a research assistant on the Harvard-Yenching Institute Chinese-English dictionary project and a Fulbright Research Fellow at Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana before joining the faculty of the State University of New York at New Paltz. In 1962, Solomon arrived at QC. Over the next 25 years, he taught modern and classical Chinese language, literature, and civilization, and founded the programs in Chinese and East Asian Studies. His scholarly works include The Veritable Record of the T’ang Emperor Shou-tsung and On the School of Names in Ancient China. He was also co-editor of The Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms by Su-ma Kuang.
Generous new aid from Gerstner Philanthropies will help Queens College students facing emergencies that could derail their education. Gerstner has given the college a Helping Hands grant of $83,333 for the 2023–2024 academic year, to be administered by Student Affairs under the leadership of Vice President Jennifer Jarvis. Student awards from this grant are assessed and managed by Sean Pierce, interim assistant vice president for student affairs, and his assistant Maylene Santiago.

Gerstner is a family foundation with philanthropic programs primarily in three cities. Their Helping Hands awards are directed toward organizations that help individuals move past temporary, but potentially challenging, setbacks. “That’s the specific type of case our foundation and our chairman hope to help. We have now given over $33 million in total,” says Pierre. 

Partnering with colleges began only recently, but from the outset Gerstner focused on CUNY. They were already familiar with the Queens College programs aided by the Petrie Foundation, and also conducted some exploratory research of their own. They wanted to support colleges that had a track record of improving students’ social mobility,” says Goh. “The other criterion was to partner with schools that had a demonstrated commitment to serving disadvantaged students.” Queens College “did very well on those two measures,” she adds, “and rose to the top as a good partner.”

In addition to support from the personal oversight and services offered by Queens, “We were very impressed by Jennifer Jarvis,” says Molly Gelinas, program officer of Gerstner Philanthropies. “She had been running the student emergency department and had a deep understanding of the types of students being helped. She was able to give us satisfaction that there was rigorous due diligence and review of the cases that came across her desk.”

They were also reassured by the variety of related “wraparound” services offered by Queens. “One of the keys to the success of this work is not just the cash, but also having a very strong student affairs department or team in place that can have a holistic view of helping a person,” says Gelinas. According to Christina Rosa-Ragusa, associate director of leadership giving, “We work closely with Jennifer and Sean and their team to identify needs that are unmet and try to connect organizations with the college in an effort to try to bridge that gap in funding for students. It’s one of the best parts of what we get to do on a day-to-day basis—really trying to serve our students and help them with basic needs that are going to help them get to the finish line and graduate and be able to get a job and go up the economic ladder.”

Myriad unforeseen and often profound troubles could potentially deter students from finishing their studies. Typical emergency needs involve overdue electric or wireless bills, a car accident, sickness in the family, a hospital bill, and similar economic shocks, but the most common trigger is rent as students struggle to afford housing in the city. Students’ applications for emergency grants come in steadily, especially since the May 11 end to federal emergency funds and rules for the pandemic, including stays of evictions for late rent payments. “We have every situation you can imagine,” says Pierce. “Our whole approach is: We understand you’re in a jam. We want to help you out, but also we want to make sure you don’t repeat whatever the pattern is that got you into this jam. We want to ensure you’re going to be able to stand on your own two feet moving forward and continue to be successful.”

While the Helping Hands grant helps students cover the cost of an immediate emergency, Pierce and Santiago also consult with each grant recipient individually. They are experienced at helping them improve their financial literacy and budget skills, and they can put them in touch with further economic help, scholarship information, or job-hunting assistance as needed. Their toolkit is varied. For instance, the Helping Hands grant sets a lifetime cap of $3,000 in emergency aid to any one student, but Student Affairs is able to direct students—and even personally conduct them—to resources that allow them to stretch their cash, such as the Knights’ Food Pantry, free Metro cards, and gift cards for laundry.

For students, a cash gift at the right moment can make the difference between finishing college or not. The wraparound services can have a crucial impact as well. As Pierre puts it, “At CUNY and Queens College, our goal is to help students achieve upward mobility, to have opportunities they may not have had prior to coming to our institution. We want to make sure that we’ve got you connected to one or more of the institutions that will help you on your journey because we want you to graduate, we want you to be able to take that next step and be successful.”

Jacquelyn Southern

Seven years ago, World Language Education at Queens College added to its undergraduate, post-BA, and graduate options by launching a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Critical Languages, the only such program in the United States. As might be expected in the polyglot Borough of Queens, where estimates for the number of languages spoken by residents start at 150, the MAT keeps expanding. Through the program, teacher certification is now available in a dozen of the languages deemed to have particular value for national security: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Russian, and Urdu. This year, through a generous grant from the Steinhardt Foundation for Jewish Life and in collaboration with the Brandeis University Consortium for the Teaching of Hebrew Language and Culture, QC has begun offering its 15th MAT in Critical Languages—in modern Hebrew, the national language of Israel. Thirteen is a favorable number in Jewish culture. For starters, it’s the age when a boy becomes a bar mitzvah (girls can become bat mitzvahs at age 12). By 12. Some accounts, Israel’s founders named 13 members to its first provisional government, to enhance their luck. Clearly, 13 is proving auspicious for QC. The Steinhardt grant will fund scholarships, adjuncts for specific courses in Hebrew language and culture, guest lectures, and related programs. “We are thrilled to support Queens in this work,” says Rabbi David Gedzelman, president and CEO of the foundation. “We are excited to partner with an institution that looks at teaching languages the way we do.”

For learners who spent years drilling the grammar of a foreign language without developing the ability to use it, the methods of World Language Education—a unit within the School of Education’s Department of Secondary Education and Youth Services (SEYS)—would represent a welcome change. World Language Education prepares teachers to stress practical skills. “We emphasize intercultural competence and language proficiency that learners can use right away in the community, at college, at work, and in the world,” says Jennifer Eddy, the program’s director. World Language Education says there are so few secondary schools that districts accept its candidates as intern even if they haven’t quite completed the program.

It was only natural for QC to become part of the Consortium for the Teaching of Hebrew Language and Culture, which gets some of its funding from Steinhardt and advances principles similar to those of World Language Education. One challenge to overcome in the United States is that classes in modern Hebrew are often led by native speakers, whether or not they have pedagogical backgrounds. “There’s a big difference between language learning and language acquisition,” observes Vardi Ringvald, the consortium’s director. “For retention, teacher training is key.” Consequently, the consortium, which originally collaborated with the Hebrew Union College and now, in addition to QC, also includes Universidad Hebraica in Mexico City, seeks to professionalize Hebrew instruction. Demand already exceeds supply in the New York metro area and beyond. Growing numbers of public schools, charter schools, Jewish day schools, and yeshivas are in the market for credentialed Hebrew teachers.

“We always need Hebrew teachers,” says Valerie Khaytina, chief external officer of Hebrew Public, which oversees a network of five managed charter schools and six affiliates across the country, teaching children of all backgrounds. “We look everywhere for native or near-native speakers with American classroom management experience. Having that [MAT] training will help be successful.”

Ringvald and Eddy began discussing the Hebrew MAT before the pandemic. “When I conceived of this program, I couldn’t think of any institution better suited to it than Queens College,” says Eddy, citing the college’s supportive community and excellent Hebrew language and Jewish studies faculty, and the track record of World Language Education. Rabbi Gedzelman, who collaborated with David Gerwin (SEYS) on Hebrew language charter schools, is equally enthusiastic. “We have a good relationship with the School of Education. World Language Education has a great model of creating a community of teacher-scholars of all backgrounds learning to teach languages.”

“QC is proud to partner with the Steinhardt Foundation in meeting an urgent need for professionally credentialed Hebrew language teachers, including coursework on modern Hebrew culture and expression,” says Gerwin.

Many world language teachers end up in schools where they lead one-person departments. Like the MATs in other languages, QC’s 39-credit, post-baccalaureate program in modern Hebrew will prepare people for design as well as teach K-12 curriculum. Upon completing the first 24 credits, candidates receive initial certification, which allows them to start working in the classroom. To earn the MAT and become eligible for professional certification, they have to finish the remaining 15 graduate credits.

Career changers are encouraged to apply to the program. “Whether it’s five or twenty years after they graduated, we welcome them with open arms,” Eddy says. A degree in Hebrew is not required; neither is previous teaching experience. Instead, applicants will be asked to demonstrate their language skills through an oral interview and a writing proficiency test administered by Language Testing International. For more information about the MAT in Critical Languages Education in Hebrew, contact Jennifer Eddy at jennifer.eddy@qc.cuny.edu.

Leslie Jay

How To Teach Hebrew

With support from the Steinhardt Foundation, QC launches a program to professionalize instruction in a critical language

QUEENS GIVING BACK

Extending “Helping Hands” Gerstner philanthropies give the college a grant to get students through temporary setbacks and keep them in school

Gerstner Philanthropies gives the college a grant to get students through temporary setbacks and keep them in school.
Brooklyn College, Medgar Evers College, New York City College of Technology—received the same generous grant, as did a private college, The New School. Other New York City colleges—both public and private—received smaller grants to be disbursed over 12 months to address food insecurity. In 2022, Queens College received a $20,000 grant to be disbursed over 12 months to address food access and food insecurity. Several other New York colleges received similar amounts for the same purpose.

The Petrie Foundation has been providing emergency grants to students since 2005. It collaborates with CUNY and some private colleges in New York City with significant numbers of low-income students. CUNY colleges distribute more than $1.5 million in Petrie Student Emergency Grants to approximately 1,800 students annually.

In the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, when CUNY launched the Chancellor’s Emergency Relief Fund, the foundation stepped forward to provide a $1 million grant. Expressing the foundation’s essential mission at that critical time, Cass Conrad, the foundation’s executive director, observed, “Not only will this fund provide near-term relief to CUNY students and their families, but we believe it will help ensure that they can remain in school, complete their degrees, and ultimately contribute to the revival of the city. Through its work with CUNY and other nonprofit organizations, the Petrie Foundation has a long history of enabling New Yorkers to achieve their college and career goals, even in the most challenging times.”

With respect to career goals, the Petrie Foundation supports programs to ensure that upon graduation students find strong first jobs. These include projects that provide career exploration, networking, and advising to navigate the job market, and internships that may facilitate job placement, enhance technical skills and credentials valued by employers, and foster productive collaboration between workforce training programs and college degree programs.

Petrie Foundation funding is assisting QC students in other ways, as well. In 2022 QC received a $50,000 Innovation Grant toward Persistence and Completion Grant for QC ADAPTS (Academic Development Ambassador Program for Transfer Students). These grants aim to support transfer students among others as part of the foundation’s goal of ensuring that students persist in remaining in college and on track to a career. Also, in 2022 Queens College received, as did other CUNY senior colleges, a $40,000 grant to be used over 12 months for its Campus Climate Initiative with Hillel International, one of an ongoing series of measures the university has initiated to address an uptick in antisemitism globally, locally, and on campuses across the country. As of July 2023, 50 colleges and universities across the United States are participating in the initiative, which Hillel says is aimed at ensuring Jewish students feel comfortable expressing their diverse identities free of antisemitism, harassment, and marginalization.

“All students deserve to feel safe, nurtured, and valued by their faculty and peers,” said Conrad. “We are so pleased that CUNY and Hillel have chosen to work together to ensure that Jewish students, staff, and faculty have what they need to thrive academically and socially on campus. We are happy to support the Campus Climate Initiative, which we hope will pay dividends for students of all backgrounds and faiths for years to come.”

—Bob Suter

Increasing Opportunity

The Petrie Fund Foundation enables low-income New Yorkers to achieve their college and career goals

Nearly four years on, it remains difficult to calculate the enormity of the economic impact experienced by most Americans because of the Covid-19 pandemic. While the federal government stepped forward with multiple rounds of record-low Economic Impact Payments to aid individuals who became unemployed or whose incomes were otherwise disrupted, the funds often fell short of providing full economic security.

For college students working to prepare for careers, the prospect of completing their education was often in immediate jeopardy, with many experiencing food insecurity and difficulty meeting routine daily expenses. At Queens College, however, students had a lifeline: The Carroll & Milton Petrie Student Emergency Grant Fund, expressly created to help low-income New York City college students in the grips of an emergency continue their education without interruption and successfully complete their degrees.

Petrie emergency funds could address all such things as overdue utility bills/shut-off notices, risk for eviction/homelessness; assistance for paying for goods, transportation, and basic necessities due to recent unemployment or sudden financial difficulty. The emergency fund was created by the Carroll and Milton Petrie Fund Foundation, a philanthropic organization whose goal is to increase economic opportunity by strengthening college and career opportunities for low-income New Yorkers.

In 2021, Queens College received a $300,000 grant to be disbursed over a 12-month period. Other CUNY campuses—
Each academic year, the Office of Institutional Advancement brings professionals on campus to represent multiple industries and sectors. Our distinguished speakers are experts in their fields as well as role models for career success. Many of them got their start at Queens College. Professionals on Campus gives students the opportunity to learn from and interact with alumni and friends of the college representing multiple industries and sectors.

We are proud to recognize the exceptional participants for the 2022–2023 academic year.

**Rajib Ahmed ’05, Chief Technology and Product Officer, Meetup**

**Celeste Guth ’82, Partner, Strategic Advisory Group, PJT Partners**

**Freda Johnson ’68, Former President, Government Finance Associates, Inc. and Board of Directors, NEWPF**

**Joseph Milizio, Managing Partner, Vrishick McGovern Milizio LLP**

**Leigh Nader, Managing Director, Assured Guaranty Corp. and Board of Directors, NEWPF**

**Cheslan Simpson ’95, Senior Scientist, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory**

**Joseph Trotti ’80, Partner, Vrishick McGovern Milizio LLP**

**Vanessa Youngs, Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Moody’s Corporation and Board of Directors, NEWPF**

**Frank Tu ’94, Founder, Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Investment Officer, Aliy Bridge Group**

**Margaret Medina, President, 1974-2024 National Ambassador for the United States for the Friends of CUNY and Salute Our Veterans**

**Thomas Dolan**

**Lana Hechtman**

**Bernard Bosio**

**Chernick Forest Hills last year…**

**Sandra Cahn**

**Sally N. Levine**

**Howell Rose**

**Dena Fisher**

**Daniel Chernick**

**Jay Berfas**

**Sewanhaka Central High School interim superintendent of the Sewanhaka Central High School District…**

**Lois Gabin**

**Mary Arienti**

**Thomas Deluca**

**Jahanara Miotto**

**Joe Steinfeld**

**Kim Lloyd**

**Jenifer Moseley**

**Barry D. Bass**

**Rajiv Arora**

**Ada Ayers**

**Jay Jay:**

**Marianne Troppoli**

**Vivian Altman, Managing Director and Head of Public Affairs, Chief Technology and Product Officer, the college representing multiple industries and sectors.**

**Lisa Cole, Principal, Municipal Credit Research, Partner, Eisner Advisory Group LLC**

**Esther Muehlbauer (Biology); in bottom photo from left, Amber Guth in conversation with Cheslan Simpson ’95, Leigh Nader, Managing Director, Assured Guaranty Corp. and Joseph Milizio, Managing Partner, Vishnick McGovern Milizio LLP**

**Stella Deloera of Community Health**

**Freda Johnson ’68, Former President, Government Finance Associates, Inc and Board of Directors, NEWPF**

**Celeste Guth ’82, Partner, Strategic Advisory Group, PJT Partners**

**Freda Johnson ’68, Former President, Government Finance Associates, Inc. and Board of Directors, NEWPF**

**Michael Breit ’84, Chairman and CEO, EiserAmper LLP and Partner, Eiser Advisory Group LLC**

**Suzanne Brenner ’81, Partner & Chief Investment Officer, Brown Brothers Harriman**

**Ira Cohen ’77, Founder and Principal, Ira Cohen, P.A.**

**Lisa Cole, Principal, Municipal Credit Research, Prudential Financial and Board of Directors, NEWPF**

**Jennifer Fredericks, Director of Business Development, Public Finance, Ice Miller LLP and Board of Directors, NEWPF**

**Amber Guth ’79, Surgeon and Professor of Surgery, NYU Langone Health**

1968: Donna Fisher was named to the board of Community Health Program, which provides medical, dental, and nutrition services in the Berkley area. The second exhibition is seen through putting aside that knowledge and considering the work as the artist intended, 1989: Jahanara Miotto was hired to be the principal of Villa Maria Academy in the Bronx. She had taught at the school for more than two decades prior to her appointment. 1987: Lisa Deloera of Community Health was elected as grand president of Daughters of Charity of Providence. The Daughters of Charity of Providence is a Roman Catholic order of religious women who are dedicated to the care of the sick. 1982: Elsa D’Alessandro was appointed as Ulster County public defender. She worked as Hurley town justice from 2007 to 2010. She has worked in the Public Defender’s Office as family court bureau chief since 2012. 1981: Lana Hechtman was appointed secretary of the Sewanhaka Central High School District. 1975: Hilda (Davy) Dyer will oversee the day-to-day operations of the four campuses. 1973: Elsa Deloera of Community Health was appointed as Ulster County public defender. She served as Hurley town justice from 2007 to 2010. She has worked in the Public Defender’s Office as family court bureau chief since 2012. 1981: Lana Hechtman was appointed to the board of Community Health. She is also the past president of Hillel at Queens College. She was appointed secretary of the Sewanhaka Central High School District. 1975: Marrianne Troppoli was elected as grand president of Daughters of Charity of Providence. The Daughters of Charity of Providence is a Roman Catholic order of religious women who are dedicated to the care of the sick.
March 2023: Racquel-Maria Sapin received a 2023-2024 Friedman Scholar Fellowship. She will travel to Suriname, where she will support the use of mobile language as a medium of instruction at the primary level in Suriname. Sapin will also develop and deliver two series of workshops aimed at increasing resources and visibility for minority languages of Suriname, as well as advancing research into language ideologies in the country. 1995: Michelle Wright was named senior director of education at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School. 1996: William Ferris (MLS '99) is the new director for the East Meadow Public Library. 1997: Jessica Bader (MS) was selected as the new principal at James H. Vernon School in the Oyster Bay-Bay Shore School District. ...historian, was elected as the youngest president of the Republic of Cyprus. She assumed office in February 2023. She previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2018 to 2022 and Spokesman of the Government from 2014 to 2018. 1998: Lanae Bukalov (MS'98), a teacher at Bayshore High School and the 2023 Math for America Muller (MSEd ’03), a teacher at …surviving child of need, crisis, or transition. 2006: (MA ‘06) was named the director of the Floyd School District in Shirley, New York. 2005: Yvonne Solomon, a nurse, was selected for the newly created position of the Chief Medical Examiner. Solomon, a nurse, was selected for the newly created position of the Chief Medical Examiner...at the Metropolitan Opera House. 2009: Douthitt is a renowned saxophone player, made her debut performance at the Lincoln Center last April...to support the Kupferberg Center for the Arts and their mission. WELCOME TO A NEW ENERGY IN BANKING.
In Memoriam

During the past year the college community has learned of the loss of some of its valued members. They will be missed and warmly remembered by their friends and colleagues.

Frank A. Abbott ’72
Alan Ackerman ’63
Blanca J. Alarcén ’60
Joel Alper ’70
John P. Altman ’66
William Bell ’78
Doris Meyers Bellis ’66
William Bell ’78
John F. Behrens ’66
Janice Bauer ’70
Rosalie Corigliano Barr ’53
Joanna Barnes
Elaine Radoff Barkin ’54
Elizabeth Bacon
Bernard Bachrach ’61
Alice A. Alers Aviles MA ’78
Hanacho Atako ’53
Frank Askinazy
Helene Antell ’80
Eleanor Dekaner Anselmini ’43
Jane Anderson ’49
Joan Ambrosino ’65
Percy Allen
Keshawna Alderman ’19
Alan Ackerman ’63
Frank A. Abbate ’72
by their friends and colleagues.

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Irving Marks '74
Michael William Marin '73
Susan R. Durels Mantel '88
Beverly Rubin Manning '58
Salvatore C. Manfre '86
Barbara Kearns Malanga '86
Stanley Madow '52
Shirley Madonna '67
Theodore Luzzi
Vikram Lund '88
Judith Ann Smith Lowry '60
Janet Westervelt Loomer '48
Pearl Miller Lipton '72
Donna Lipper
Barry Liles '58
Peter Licht '76
Loretta Litroff Liberman '62
Steven Lewis '70
Judith Orman Lewis '61
Karin Rappl Levy '73
Leonard Levine '54
Scott Leisten '80,'86
John Joseph Lee '55
Marjorie Ledley
Otto W. Lazareth, Jr. '68
Robert Laufer '86, '98
Agnes Tamm Laube '51
Stewart Lattner '86
Fern Stone Laskin '86
Evelyn Lasker '86
Heinz Langer '73
Barbara G. Lane
Robert Landon '86
Annette H. Landau '41
Lawrence Kushner '45
Joan A. Kushner '49
Joel Kushins '64
Edmund Kurz
Edith Alice Kaplan Kur '62
Kathleen Kulbaba '86
Lorraine Kikoen Krimsky '71
Thomas Krant '86
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QUEENS ALUMNI NOTES

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SAVE THE DATE

Queens College’s 33rd Gala
Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 583 Park Avenue

Queens College’s 32nd Gala was a wonderful event. We honored three distinguished alumni: Richard R. Barakat ’81, Amber A. Guth ’79, and Celeste A. Guth ’82.

Our emcee, Gail A. Marquis ’80, led the evening’s festivities, which showcased music from our talented students, faculty, and alumni.

Join us at our next Gala at 583 Park Avenue!