BEYOND THE PAGE

The Liberal Arts—
Transforming Tradition,
Igniting Possibilities
From the President’s Desk

As president of Brooklyn College for the past seven years, I have had the great fortune to lead one of the most exciting, inspiring, and diverse academic institutions in the country. As I prepare for retirement I have reflected fondly on the many people I have worked with and the many outstanding qualities of the campus community.

Since my arrival in 2009, we have improved the conditions for student success, which is our core responsibility as an institution of higher learning. More of our students are graduating as a result of our focus on degree completion, and we have supported and promoted the exceptional research and scholarship of our faculty to foster academic excellence and enhance the reputation of Brooklyn College.

The impact of private philanthropy through the Campaign for Success has expanded funding for student scholarships, study abroad, and paid internships. Coupled with significant funding from the Office of the Borough President, New York City Council, the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, and the New York State Senate, private support has helped create the Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema and construct the much anticipated Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts.

Moreover, thanks to the exceptional generosity of Murray Koppelman ’57 and other alumni, the Murray Koppelman School of Business has been named and will soon be the only accredited school of business in Brooklyn. Devoted alumni have also enabled the college to name seven new endowed chairs since 2009, provide substantial new support for the library, and fund travel for our athletic teams.

I am deeply appreciative of our dedicated alumni, major donors, foundation supporters, borough, city, and state stakeholders, and community partners, all of whom understand how their support can vastly improve the quality of a Brooklyn College education.

This edition of B magazine focuses on our liberal arts tradition and how our students are engaged in active learning “beyond the page.” From the Listening Project, an interdisciplinary, oral history community project, to the student-organized TEDx CUNY conference, you will read about a broad range of scholarly activities that explore the power of liberal arts training and connect liberal arts disciplines to contemporary urban life.

Soon I will be reading about Brooklyn College from a distance—in my home state of California—but I will continue to take great pride in the future accomplishments and inclusive excellence of the college. I will miss the energy and ambitious spirit of Brooklyn College students, the impressive achievements and commitment of the faculty, and the tremendous dedication of the college staff and senior leadership team.

I am pleased to welcome Michelle Anderson as the 10th president of the Brooklyn College. I have no doubt that President Anderson will build upon the many strengths of the college and provide thoughtful, effective leadership in the years ahead.

Thank you for ongoing interest and support of the college, for your advice and feedback over the years, and for your friendship.

Karen Gould

President

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President
The Benefits of a Liberal Arts Education by Dean Richard Greenwald

We're in a unique space, economically and socially. The economy has changed so much. Students understand this even if they haven't thought it all the way through; they are likely to change jobs and careers multiple times. If they want to prepare themselves for those future challenges and opportunities, they can't focus on just one specialty anymore. They have to know how everything interconnects.

I think one of our challenges is to remind the world of the importance of the humanities and social sciences—not merely from an academic standpoint, but also in regard to skills and habits imparted.

I was afraid to tell my father that I actually liked history and wanted to be a history major because often the follow-up question was: “What can you do with that?” It never occurred to me that there were lots of things you could do with that, that you don't have to think of a major as a vocation. So our job is to let students know that there's a life outside of the major; that the skills one learns in these majors open doors. We must find a way to give them confidence to pursue their passions.

One of the things that the humanities and social sciences are in a unique position to (help us) do is to build bridges connecting the various parts of the college.

In HSS, we are doing a grassroots "mission and vision" effort. We're developing a strategic plan that involves lots of conversations and town halls to get faculty to reach a consensus about our school's values so that they can speak to students about what we can offer them.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded $100,000 to the Brooklyn College Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) to fund a special program designed to target the often overlooked transfer-student population, and provide them with unique academic research and mentorship opportunities. The program is vital to one's development as a person and as a citizen.

A Minnesota native, Flahaven had already earned an M.F.A. in musical theater writing from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts when he chose to obtain his M.F.A. in performing arts management from the Brooklyn College Theater Department, a degree that helped him focus on the fiscal nuts and bolts of theater production. "The college provided me with the skills I needed in contract negotiations, budgeting, marketing, fundraising, and other areas," he explains.

Today, Flahaven works as a senior vice president of theater and catalyzer development for Warner/Chappell Music (WCM), the global music publishing arm of the Warner Music Group, one of the three largest music companies in the world. The company represents songwriters of all genres.

As a composer and musical producer, his work has been performed in New York and Dublin. He has worked on many shows with composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim for the past 15 years, as well as arranging a symphonic work, A Sondheim Suite, in honor of the composer's 80th birthday. He was an arts journalist and editor for 15 years, writing for the Sondheim Review, Show Music, Playbill, and the former Broadwayonline.com.

In addition to producing more than 100 shows, concerts, workshops, and readings from major Broadway and off-Broadway companies, Flahaven has been part of the NYU Tisch Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program since 2002.

I'm a big believer in arts education," Flahaven says. "I started with voice and trombone very young, and continued with that, plus acting, writing, and music composition in high school, college, and graduate school. I believe a liberal arts education, with a strong performing arts component, is vital to one's development as a person and as a citizen."

Before joining WCM, Flahaven was the director of development at the off-Broadway York Theater, managing director of the Melting Pot Theatre, and general manager for Theatrical Rights, a licensing agency.
Sarah Benson ’04 M.F.A. Wins $50,000 Vilcek Foundation Theater Arts Award

The prize is awarded to immigrants for outstanding contributions to the arts and sciences in America. SARAH BENSON ’04 M.F.A. won the prestigious Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Theatre in February. Each year, the Vilcek Foundation awards the prize—which comes with a $50,000 gift—to immigrants who have demonstrated excellence in the American arts and sciences. “Such a wonderful group of artists have won this prize in the past,” says Benson. “This is the first year that it has been awarded to theater artists, and I’m just so happy to be one of them.”

Benson came to the United States from England in 2002, via the Fulbright Scholarship, to pursue her master of fine arts in directing at Brooklyn College. She says the Vilcek Prize will allow her the financial freedom to devote more time to and think rigorously about her art—an art, Benson said, that Brooklyn College helped her to cultivate. “My time at Brooklyn College was hugely important in nurturing relationships with other artists,” says Benson. “I encourage students to really relish all of the rich possibilities.”

Benson is known for her directorial work on Sarah Kane’s Blasted, David Adjmi’s A Woman’s Worth, and Richard Maxwell on his experimental play Samora, and is in the beginning stages of a theater project with playwright Jackie Sibblies Drury that examines society in the age of increased government surveillance.

—Robert Jones, Jr.

Uncovering the Ancient Past, with Support from the Magner Career Center

Anastasia Danilova’s journey to South Dakota to study prehistoric marine fossils enabled her to work with renowned experts and cement her passion for exploration. When ANASTASIA DANILOVA ’96 returned from a ten-day paleontological dig in South Dakota, made possible through a Magner Career Center stipend, she knew that she would soon be meeting with Marge Magner ’69 to share her discoveries. Danilova could not find the words to express her gratitude to the center’s namesake, so she presented Magner with one of the fossils she’d unearthed at the research site. “She provided me with something extremely amazing,” Danilova says. “Bringing back a fossil was the least I could do. There are not enough people like her in the world. I hope that one day I’ll be able to do for others what Marge Magner did for me.”

Danilova traveled to South Dakota with scientists from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) to collect and study the fossilized remains of ammonites, carnivorous aquatic creatures that lived on Earth approximately 240 million years ago. Much of the work was conducted on the property of South Dakota ranchers who granted the researchers permission. She was also able to spend some time with Neal L. Larson, president of Larson Paleontology Unlimited, and Neil Landman, Ph.D., curator-in-charge of the Department of Paleontology at AMNH, with whom she was able to view the fossils of a new species of triceratops.

Most important for Danilova was the ability to connect her study of these ancient creatures to contemporary concerns. “These organisms went through a period of stress and didn’t make it. So we’re looking at the conditions then, in atmosphere and climate, and comparing them to conditions now. You gain an entirely new perspective about what might happen to current species—including us—and how we might prevent catastrophe.”

Danilova, originally from Moscow, was a transfer student from New York University majoring in earth and environmental sciences and mathematics. Her academic path was that of a nontraditional student, coming back to college after having taken some time off to raise a family. She is the mother of a three-year-old girl, but has had the support of her husband and entire family. Danilova is so impressed with her academic experiences at Brooklyn College that she plans to apply to graduate school. “I really like the [earth and environmental sciences] department. Everyone is very welcoming. They really want students to flourish.”

—Robert Jones, Jr.
Music Without Borders

Conservatory of Music Professor Arturo O’Farrill ’96 Wins Fourth Grammy Award.

Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music Professor Arturo O’Farrill ’96 scored another victory for his band, the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, burningish his father’s (and his own) legacy in the process. At the 58th Grammy Award ceremony in Los Angeles, O’Farrill was presented his fourth such award, this time in the Best Instrumental Composition category for his “Afro Latin Jazz Suite,” a track on his 2015 album Cubo: The Conversation Continues. Last year, he received the Grammy in the Best Latin Jazz category for The Offense of the Drum.

“The academy’s recognition of the ‘Afro Latin Jazz Suite’ is deeply meaningful to me,” says O’Farrill, who joined the Brooklyn College faculty in 2014. “This music is my interpretation of jazz; it’s the idea Dizzy Gillespie first proposed when he said there was no difference between Latin and jazz, just a music he called universal. The suite is musically multilingual, drawing from Africa, Peru, Cuba, India, and the United States. It is a nod to the past, performed now, yet firmly rooted in the future.”

Originally commissioned by the Apollo Theater for its 80th anniversary, the “Afro Latin Jazz Suite,” which features noted alto sax virtuoso Rudresh Mahanthappa, also commemorates the 65th anniversary of the “Afro Cuban Jazz Suite,” a melody composed by O’Farrill’s father, Chico O’Farrill, a Cuban jazz legend, whose 1941 recording featured sax legend Charlie Parker. O’Farrill and his Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra have previously received Latin Grammys in the Best Jazz Album category for The Offense of the Drum and the Best Jazz Instrumental Album category for Song for Chico.

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Paul Beatty ’89 M.F.A. Receives National Book Critics Circle Award

The Sell-out, Beatty’s most recent novel, has also been named one of the best books of 2015 by The New York Times.

Paul BEATTY ’89 M.F.A., won the prestigious National Book Critics Circle fiction award for his latest novel, The Sell-out. The critically acclaimed satirical work examines race and class through the outrageous actions and trials experienced by its protagonist.

“I worked extremely hard, and it was nice to be recognized by the NBCC,” says Beatty. “Last year my good friend Willie Perdomo was nominated; they also nominated Claudia Rankin’s Citizen in two categories, which I thought was very smart, so I gained a deep respect for the organization. In many respects, they go against the grain, and I’m all for that.”

Beatty, the first-ever Nuyorican Poets Café grand slam poetry champion, is the author of several novels and books of poetry, including Big Bank Take Little Bank: New Poets, Nos. 1 (Nuyorican Poets Café Press, 1991); Joker, Joker (Penguin, 1994); The White Bay Shuffile (Houghton Mifflin, 1996); Tuff (Alfred A. Knopf, 2000); and Sumberland (Bloomsbury USA, 2008).

Beatty’s Brooklyn College was where I learned not how to write necessarily, but how to think about writing. I had a few professors who helped me a great deal. Tucker Farley’s seminars helped me develop an eye and feel for nuance. She never stopped peeling away the layers. Allen Ginsberg’s generosity, his oddball stories, and his boundless love for poetry and process, always left me grateful and thinking. I didn’t know you could to that. And his insistence on clarity forced me to be precise. But Louis Asekoff was the professor who was most instrumental in my growth. His patience, insight and encouragement helped me figure out not only what I wanted to say, but more importantly, how I wanted to say it.”

Named as one of the best books of 2015 by The New York Times, The Sellout was published in the United Kingdom in May.

Robert Jones, Jr.

A Well-Composed Life

Conservatory of Music Distinguished Professor Tania León’s life changed when a chance recital for the director of a famous dance theater put her on a path to an esteemed musical career.

TANIA LEÓN’s grandfather bought her a second-hand piano when she was five. “I was so little, my legs would dangle off the bench when I sat in front of it to play,” she recalls now with a smile. “The eight pesos a month it cost was a real sacrifice for a family that fit three generations into a tiny apartment in Havana, Cuba, in the 1940s. But the sacrifice would pay off many times over, as her grandparents were not the only ones who would see promise in the current distinguished professor in the Conservatory of Music.

After earning both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in piano performance, theory, and orchestration—a system for singing notes—in Cuba, León came to New York City. “I can still remember taking a taxi from the airport and looking at the big buildings and their fire escapes,” she says. “I started shouting the words to the song ‘Maria’ from West Side Story.”

New York City definitely had plans for her. Before she finished her studies at New York University, where she validated her original bachelor’s degree and obtained a master’s degree in composition, a friend who played the piano for dance classes at the Harlem School of the Arts fell ill and asked León to fill in for her. León still remembers taking the D train to 145th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue for the class, when premier dancer Arthur Mitchell walked in looking for a space to start a project he was working on. He had already made a name for himself as the first African American to perform a solo with the New York City Ballet. When he asked León at the piano, she asked if he would play for his own classes. She did. Later, he asked her to write a ballet for a dance company he was putting together called The Dance Theatre of Harlem.

She would go on to become a founding member and the first music director for the famous dance company from 1970 to 1978. She continued to work with the company until 1982, conducting for their seasons in New York.

“From that, the opportunities to create new works started to arrive,” she says. “I took advantage of every one of them.”

Over the years, León has been commissioned by orchestras across the country and abroad. She’s collaborated with playwrights and poets, including Alan Ginsberg, Rita Dove, Margaret Atwood, and Derek Walcott. In 1994, she and Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka created their award-winning opera, Scourge of Hyacinths.

The first Latina to be inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, León has been a Grammy nominee, and was named a Guggenheim Fellow in 2007. She was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 2009 for her orchestral piece Acino.

León started teaching at Brooklyn College as an adjunct in 1985. She went on to become a tenured member of the faculty and, in 2000, was named a Claire and Leonard Tow Professor. She became a distinguished professor in 2006. In 2010, she founded Composers New, a monthly orchestral music festival that spans venues throughout the five boroughs of New York City, featuring composers from genres as diverse as jazz, opera, indie, and electronic music. Its mission is to honor composers for their contribution to society. “I want this project to be a part of my legacy for the City of New York,” she says.

She is on sabbatical for the 2016–2017 academic year, collaborating on an opera with Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The piece will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the events that immortalized the Little Rock Nine—the nine black students at the center of the 1957 fight to integrate the school system in Little Rock, Arkansas.

“I never would have even dreamed to work on such big, important projects,” she says. “My grandmother was the one who told me, “You are going to travel, and your name is going to be on the front of theaters.’ I’m grateful. I don’t think I could have asked for a better life in the arts.”

—Samantha Simmons
TV and Radio M.F.A. Students Debut Talent Show Spotlighting Brooklyn Artists

Each 30-minute episode of Brooklyn's Best is produced and directed entirely by students, and streamed live via the Brooklyn College TV Center.

A new, yearlong, capstone class in the DEPARTMENT OF TELEVISION AND RADIO is not only preparing second-year M.F.A. candidates to hit the ground running after graduation, but it has enabled them to break new ground as well.

Eleven graduate students enrolled in Television and Radio Professor Jason Moon’s Multi-Camera Producing and Directing class launched the first episode of Brooklyn’s Best this past February, a show dedicated to finding Brooklyn’s best artists and performers.

“I like to challenge students beyond class expectations,” says Moore, an award-winning director of commercials, television, and film who joined the Brooklyn College faculty in 2015. “So while I raised the bar and asked them to think about working collectively, it was the students who came up with the idea of the show.”

Each of the six 30-minute episodes of Brooklyn’s Best will be produced and directed by different students, assisted by a cadre of undergraduate and first-year M.F.A. students, in addition to the television studio personnel—a total of 25 people. The show, hosted by stand-up comedian J.J. Mattise, who auditioned for the position, features three individual or groups of artists who live in Brooklyn, as well as a panel of three judges randomly selected from the crowd.

The first episode was produced and directed by Sally Lomidze and featured talent she recruited in train stations. It included a guitar-and-violin duo, a painter who does on-the-spot portraits, and a trio of break-dancers who went on to win the evening’s contest. As the director, Lomidze also had to oversee each crew member, cue in the cameras, and edit the scenes as they unfolded live.

According to Moore, all elements in the show are original—including the studio set, the videos introducing each artist or group of artists, and the soundtrack, created by Michael Zhonga, whose show featuring dance crews aired in March.

For Moore and other faculty members, their role is to prepare students for a revolution in independent TV production, similar to the one filmmakers experienced in the 1970s. “With the rise of YouTube, WiFi, and WebTV, there are new ways of creating content without having to work for a network,” Moore says. “It’s empowering and exciting.”

——Ernesto Mora

To watch live or archived webcasts go to BROOKLYNSBESTTV.COM

Original Web Miniseries Ground Students in All Aspects of TV Production

In fall 2015 Television and Radio students launched a 12-episode Web-based miniseries—the product of a cross-disciplinary program that immerses undergraduates in every process of television production—from developing their own script, to casting to filming and editing.

Shot entirely at Brooklyn College, Unproductive revolves around five close-knit friends, all seniors at an unnamed college’s television department. Tasked with finishing a video for a class taught by a no-nonsense professor, the project begins to slowly fall apart when a new team member and a romantic breakup disrupt the group dynamic.

Each student who worked on the Web series was required to take Content Development, Advanced Dramatic Screenwriting, Advanced Producing and Direction for Television, and Advanced Post-production.

To view the complete first season, visit WWW.UNPRODUCTIVEWEBSERIES.

THE BARRY R. FEIRSTEIN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF CINEMA opened its doors in fall 2015 as the first public graduate film school in New York City and the only one in the country on a working film lot.

Housed in a new 68,000-square-foot facility, the school boasts a 4,000-square-foot soundstage, makeup and wardrobe rooms, mixing studios, engineering booths, and many other features of a fully digital production and post-production environment.

By Jamilah Simmons
The Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema was built from the ground up, using state-of-the-art production and post-production equipment. We are an Avid Everywhere [digital editing system] site that makes available the industry standard for post production. Our production equipment includes everything from Red cameras to Arri Alexa digital cameras, which are also the industry standard,” says Jonathan Wacks, the founding director of the school. “We also have a full complement of lighting, grip and electrical equipment, and one of the largest student soundstages in the country.”

Recently, the school introduced two new programs, one in film scoring and the other in digital animation and VFX. The film-scoring program will offer advanced instruction and technical experience in the composition and production of music for media—including cinema, television, video games, animation, and other commercial applications. Beginning in fall 2017, the digital animation program will bridge the worlds of technology-based innovation and cinematic storytelling. Courses and workshops will be taught by industry professionals and culminate in the completion of a student portfolio of personal and collaborative work in visual effects and CG (computer-generated) animation.

From its inception, a major objective of the school has been to provide affordable access to career opportunities in the film industry while cultivating a pipeline of diverse talent. In fulfilling that goal, Feirstein is well on its way. The inaugural class comprises 70 students, half of which are women and nearly half of which are from underrepresented groups. The class that begins in the 2016–2017 academic year is expected to have more than 80 students of color.

In addition to the three-year M.F.A. in cinema arts, the school also offers a two-year M.A. in cinema studies. The M.F.A. includes specialized tracks in cinematography, directing, post-production, producing, screenwriting, digital animation and video effects, media scoring, and sonic arts. It also has a star-studded advisory board that includes director Steven Soderberg, actor Ethan Hawke, director Darren Aronofsky, cinematographers Robert Richardson and Maryse Alberti, and producer Celia Costas.

Here’s a look at some members of Feirstein’s first class.

**ANTONIA COLODRO, CINEMATOGRAPHY**

**WHY FEIRSTEIN?**
Several reasons. First, for the affordable education, and second, because it is in New York City. I thought about applying to schools before but wasn’t interested in going to Columbia or New York University since I personally don’t believe in spending that much money on a creative master’s program. I also wanted to get hands-on experience and have access to camera and lighting equipment that I had never had the opportunity to use.

**WHAT’S YOUR CREATIVE VISION/PHILOSOPHY?**
I take it from a Norman Mailer quote: “There was that law of life, so cruel and so just, that one must grow or else pay more for remaining the same.”

**FAVORITE FILM OR SCENE AND WHY?**
In the last few months I have been obsessed with the film The Wolfpack. It really is some of the best editing I have seen in a while. I love how cinematic it is, even though it is a documentary. Also, it was made by a woman, Crystal Moselle.

**WHAT’S THE TOUGHEST SCENE YOU HAVE HAD TO SHOOT?**
It was at my first cinematography job in San Marcos, Guatemala. I was shooting a documentary for a Guatemalan director and had to shoot a group of youth on a pick-up truck on extremely rocky roads. I had to make sure to keep the camera still and film the subjects, and also make sure I wasn’t going to fall off the truck.

**FAVORITE PLACE TO HANG OUT AT FEIRSTEIN OR IN THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD?**
By default, I spend way too much time and money at the Brooklyn Roasting Company. I have made friends with some of the people who work there, so sometimes I’ll get a free cup of coffee.

**CAREER GOAL?**
Traveling throughout Latin America as a leading cinematographer for documentaries and indie features.

**IF YOU COULD WORK WITH ANYONE CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE FILM INDUSTRY, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?**
I hate to say it, since he has a rather big cult following in film schools, but it would have to be Bradford Young. Rather than working with him, I would love to learn from him and soak up some of his knowledge. The sensibilities and respect he has for the subjects he films really translates onto the screen. That is something I always strive for when I am filming. His cinematography is also so lush and beautiful.

**JIALIANG ZHAO, POST-PRODUCTION**

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE FEIRSTEIN?**
First, because it’s on a working film lot and the largest soundstage complex on the East Coast—Steiner Studios. As a student at Feirstein, I can take advantage of the facilities and other resources at hand. Second, the entire production and post-production environment offers the most current
WHAT’S YOUR CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY?

The quality that I think separates great films from good ones is the ability to tell stories within the story—films that inform us or make us ask questions and think about society, human nature, and the unknown.

FAVORITE FILM OR SCENE AND WHY?

I have too many favorite films but one for sure is The Shawshank Redemption. It’s one of those films where you feel every emotion possible, and remember why. Just a beautiful film all around.

FAVORITE PLACE TO HANG OUT AT FEIRSTEIN OR IN THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD?

I like to sit on the couches as the sixth floor.

CAREER GOAL?

I want to make films I believe in. I want to put my resources into other filmmakers of color. I also want to take my resources back to my community in Chicago. My end goal is to build a production company that gives young people of color the opportunity to build skills and make professional films.

IF YOU COULD WORK WITH ANYONE CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE FILM INDUSTRY, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Ryan Coogler and Ava Duvernay. Both of them are unapologetic about their work for an international post-production company. I love to get a slice of pizza after class.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON HOW TECHNOLOGY IS RAPIDLY CHANGING POST-PRODUCTION?

I’m inspired by so many different screenwriters and directors. A short film I’m currently writing has been heavily influenced by some of the analysis we’ve done in class on Jean Renoir’s The Rules of the Game.

FAVORITE PLACE TO HANG OUT AT OR AROUND FEIRSTEIN?

Probably the student lounge on the sixth floor. The huge windows provide lots of natural light, and it’s big enough that you can socialize and eat at the tables or quietly work on the couches.

WHAT’S YOUR ULTIMATE CAREER GOAL?

To write a book. I want to write feature films, short films, sketches, television, even be in a writer’s room somewhere. As long as I’m writing, creating, and exploring, I’m happy.

IF YOU COULD WORK WITH ANYONE CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE FILM INDUSTRY, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

If I had to choose, it would be Mexican filmmaker Alejandro González Iñárritu in the hopes that I can also work with Mexican cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki. What could be better than learning from two fellow foreign artists at the top of their respective crafts?

WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY?

I’m impressed with his editing of this film. I hope one day to be able to edit as well as he does.

WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY?

The association with Steiner Studios as well as the other big names behind the school was more than enough to capture my attention. After an information session and my interview with Jonathan Wachs, I knew the school was overall headed for greatness. I was eager to be a part of that. I also had the peace of mind that this incredible opportunity would come at a relatively cheap price, not a deep-debt sentence like many other graduate film schools.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE FEIRSTEIN?

I had to be a part of projects with multifaceted and multidimensional characters played by people of color. It is important for me that young people from my neighborhood see reflections of themselves on screen.

FAVORITE FILM OR SCENE AND WHY?

Mother of George is digital and editors have to master software like Final Cut Pro, and Premiere.

WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY?

To be a writer. I want to write feature films, short films, sketches, television, and maybe even a book.

WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY?

BILAL JAVED, SCREENWRITING

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE FEIRSTEIN?

To work for an international post-production company.

WHEN I CHOSE FEIRSTEIN, I had the peace of mind that this incredible opportunity would come at a relatively cheap price, not a deep-debt sentence like many other graduate film schools.

WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY?

I was so impressed with his editing of this film. I hope one day to be able to edit as well as he does.

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WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY?
The Brooklyn College-led Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay is booming. It has received more than $5 million for infrastructure, $5 million for research, and nearly $8 million for a research vessel, office renovations, and other upgrades from various organizations, including CUNY, the National Park Service, and the Rockefeller Foundation. This summer, it hosted its second biennial State of the Bay Symposium. And the institute’s first book Prospects for Resilience: Insights from New York City’s Jamaica Bay, will be released by the end of the year from Island Press.

“These are exciting times,” says Adam Parris, who became executive director of the institute last year. “We are ushering in new staff, catalyzing new research, and convening agencies, communities, and scientists, all toward a central purpose—a resilient Jamaica Bay.”

Open since fall 2013, the institute is a consortium of roughly a dozen government, academic, and nonprofit organizations focused on restoring the 18,000-acre bay, a collection of meadowlands and waterways whose soil erosion has caused the flooding of surrounding populated areas in recent years, most notably during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The protection and revitalization of the bay is considered essential, not only because it is home to more than 325 species of birds, 100 species of fish, 50 species of butterflies, two freshwater ponds, and a wide variety of flora, but also because the entire ecosystem serves as a barrier against the forces of wind and tide, helping to minimize flooding and filter out pollutants.

The institute has been busy hosting visiting scientists and providing facilities for faculty, students, and visitors to meet and share ideas. It lists its main objectives as threefold: First, conducting research on the bay; second, developing a model for studying resilience and managing urban ecosystems, while providing technical assistance to their governmental partners; and third, serving as a clearinghouse of knowledge about resilience in urban ecosystems.

Restoring Resilience

With the construction of a new research vessel, water-quality projects, symposia, and a new publication, the Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay is leading the way in creating solutions to protect and preserve New York’s urban waterways.

By Jamilah Simmons

Partners
Brooklyn College is the lead institution on the project but there are several partner institutions, including:
City University of New York
Columbia University
Cornell University
Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Rutgers University
NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies
National Park Service
New York City Department of Environmental Protection
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
New York Sea Grant
Stevens Institute of Technology
Stony Brook University, SUNY
Wildlife Conservation Society
**Experiential Learning**

Thanks to $600,000 in funding from CUNY Chancellor James B. Milliken’s Strategic Investment Initiative, the college expanded its graduate-level course, Environmental Field Investigations, which grounds students in current practices in urban watershed and aquatic resource management. The newly refashioned course is a two-part undertaking, with classwork completed during the first summer session, followed by an internship at the Natural Areas Conservancy. Acceptance into the class is very competitive, and students are awarded tuition waivers and internship stipends.

**A Vessel**

The institute has commissioned Derecktor Shipyards of Mamaroneck, New York, to build a 65-foot research catamaran to be operated out of Jamaica Bay. The vessel will use hybrid electric propulsion technology to ensure clean and quiet operation with minimal emissions, which will benefit the researchers, especially in highly sensitive ecological areas. To minimize impact on local waters, keel coolers will be used to reduce the wastewater discharge from the vessel. It will be one of the most forward-thinking and environmentally friendly vessels in operation today. Construction is expected to be completed by 2017.

**Fellowship Program**

The Consortium Internship and Fellowship Program began by providing modest funding to faculty members and students to conduct research focused on resilience in the bay. The goal of the program is to strengthen collaboration among researchers, public agencies, and other stakeholders. The institute received a $250,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, part of which will fund the project, including support for two fellows and two interns in science and management.

**Water Quality Project**

The National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior awarded the institute $36 million in post-Sandy resilience funding, and many of those dollars are helping to support a water quality project. Project researchers are gathering existing water-quality data sets from the National Park Service and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and making them available online for the scientific community. They are also conducting analysis beyond what the government agencies currently do, in order to develop a better picture of how water quality has changed over time and how it changes from location to location within the bay.

**Symposia**

The biennial State of the Bay Symposia series was initiated through a mandate of the New York City Jamaica Bay Watershed Protection Plan to bring together scientists, decision makers, and community groups to discuss relevant scientific knowledge and management strategies that enhance the resilience of Jamaica Bay. The 2016 symposium featured a graduate student research poster session to highlight the work of CUNY students in the natural sciences. The symposium concluded with a reception to cultivate fundraising opportunities and media outreach.

**Published Findings**

Prospects for Resilience: Insights From New York City’s Jamaica Bay (Island Press, 2016) is the institute’s first book and uses Jamaica Bay to demonstrate how various components of social-ecological systems interact, from climate to plant populations to human demographics. The volume also shows how an organization like the Science and Resilience Institute plays a crucial role in coordinating resilience efforts, considering significant research questions and bringing together scholars, policymakers, and the community.

In Brooklyn, there are millions of unheard stories, and Brooklyn College students have been tasked with unearth- ing as many of them as they can. With audio (and sometimes video) recorders in hand, they descend upon the borough seeking the most fanciful (or most harrowing) of these stories, all for the purpose of compiling and preserving them in a massive digital library called the Brooklyn College Listening Project (BCLP). The result is a wide array of compelling stories that show how the seemingly ordinary can be quite extraordinary and worthy of preservation. That is precisely the goal, according to Associate Professor of English and American Studies Program Director Joseph Entin, who spearheaded the project with a group of other faculty members.

“The project makes Brooklyn itself a subject and site of learning and knowledge,” says Entin. “It links the college to the borough in a new way and sees the borough as a resource.” The BCLP—the brainchild of an unprecedented collaboration between faculty members from numerous departments—is a community interview and oral history initiative that compiles a diverse range of stories about the life experiences of Brooklyn residents. Students are tasked with interviewing and recording their coworkers, friends, neighbors, relatives, and even total strangers who live in the borough. While the project itself is flexible, students are given a structure and underlying themes to explore by the faculty members guiding the program. Assignments differ from course to course. For example, Vanessa Y. Pérez, associate professor of Puerto Rican and Latino studies, advised her students to inquire about race and racial identity, while Jocelyn Willis, professor of history, asked her students to gather individual concepts of the “American dream.”

“Our student-focused approach treats them not as passive consumers, but active producers of knowledge,” says Entin. “Through the project, students become experts in documentation, conduct research, and share their findings with their peers and more broadly, the community. Further, it is a scholarly project that speaks about and to the general public. And the public will have access to these stories.”
Richard Greenwald, dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences where the project is based, notes how this work has implications beyond academia, shaping students to be even better candidates for a variety of fields. "All of the evidence and research shows that when students can apply their learning to real-world situations, it deepens their understanding; it makes them better students and more engaged," says Greenwald, who has been involved in community engagement projects for nearly 20 years. "There are a host of positive consequences. Students graduate faster and retain information better."

Greenwald adds that the project provides a way for students to better understand how the humanities and the social sciences impact and are applicable to the real world. "They get to see that what they do in the classroom isn’t disconnected from the world they live in," says Greenwald. "As we continue and expand this project, it's quite possible that in the near future we could archive 800 to 1,000 interviews on important topics affecting New York City and the nation as a whole—racial justice, policing, education, gentrification, housing, and immigration."

The project also provides students with skills that will serve them even after they graduate, making them more competitive in the job market. "Listening itself, for example, is a very important skill in the new economy, as is collective work. The new workplace is all about teams and our students have had to figure out how to work in and manage that teamwork. The new workplace is all about teams and our students have had to figure out how to work in and manage that teamwork."

Greenwald says that the life of a firefighter is one of determination, duty, and what’s happening to minorities across the country and what’s happened to minorities here. It captures a community of Brooklyn and what's happening to minorities across the country and what's happened to minorities here. "I learned what that number six million [the estimated number of Jewish people massacred in the Holocaust], really means," Wexler said. "No two stories were alike for any of the people I spoke with, and it made me think that perhaps no two stories were alike for those six million people. The weight of that knowledge, to know that there are six million stories that will never be told, is overwhelming. I also learned that Jewish people have different perspectives on the Holocaust. Some say that they will never forgive Germany, will never buy German products, etc. Others say that they don’t hate German descendants for what their ancestors did. Additionally, I learned that even after escaping or being rescued from the concentration camps, many Jews didn’t have it any easier. They still struggled financially and psychologically."

All of this was eye-opening. Wexler says that his background in history and his newfound understanding of the struggles and triumphs of his ancestors and elders has added renewed vigor to his pursuit of a law degree. He says he sees a great number of parallels between what his ancestors endured and what’s happening to minorities across the country today.

Initially, I wasn’t sure who to interview for the project," said Gina Marie Greenwald (no relation to Dean Richard Greenwald), a Brooklyn College student double-majoring in secondary education and English. "I thought my brother would be a great fit because he’s had so much training as a firefighter. Who would be more perfect to interview for a Brooklyn Listening Project than one of the men helping to protect Brooklyn?"

Greenwald followed her brother John around, documenting his every move as he went about his work. "Although I already thought of him as my hero, I never thought of him as a hero of New York City," she says. "I never realized how dangerous his job is because he never really talks about it when he’s at home. After learning about the different techniques he had to learn, all the training he endured, and what he has to do on a daily basis, I realized that not only is he an amazing brother, but he is also an amazing firefighter."

Greenwald says that the life of a firefighter is one of “lulls and chaos. One moment, they can be all sitting around the firehouse cooking, cleaning, playing cards, laughing, and telling jokes, and then a call comes in, and they all leap into action—a stunning and startling transformation, astonishing to observe. ‘I learned that firefighters aren’t what they show on television,’ Greenwald noted. ‘These people really master their craft—and when they have time they are always drilling, checking their equipment, which makes them really confident going into burning buildings.’"

Greenwald, generally a shy person, says that her work on this project helped her to open up, boosted her confidence in her academic abilities, and made her more assertive creatively. "I think the project also helped me put my organizational skills to use. So much went into it. I had to think of questions to ask my brother. I had to do research on his firehouse and on the devices they use. Then I had to organize it all in a way that made sense to me," she says. "Since they are so busy, I had to be strategic about when and where to ask questions.”

"What I love about the Brooklyn College Listening Project is that it has the potential to impact student outcomes and the larger communities of Brooklyn and New York City," says Madeline Fox, assistant professor of children and youth studies, and sociology. In her sociology course, Fox introduced her students to the project’s concept by having them conduct man-on-the-street interviews with students they encountered on the Quad, asking them about their experiences as Brooklyn College students. "We all felt that the exercise could be expanded and potentially productive for the college in terms of taking the pulse of how and what BC students are experiencing. In other words, it was fun and also meaningful," says Fox.
Mr. Demesmin has been involved in political and historic on-the-ground work that gives an audience of Good Deals Shipping.

“Speaking with Mr. Demesmin, I learned that Brooklyn remains an epicenter for Haitian immigrants. To truly survive and thrive in America, Haitians know they have to cut their teeth in Brooklyn beforebranching out to other places.”

Demesmin is a lifelong resident of Brooklyn and jumped at the chance to participate in the Listening Project because she believes Brooklyn to be a living, breathing case study of human progress.

“It’s always interesting to hear about Brooklyn from the perspective of those who were there in decades past. People move, die, or lose their memory, so we lose important perspectives. The Brooklyn portrayed in movies is just the latest incarnation. There is something special in getting more information about the Brooklyn from 1956, 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, and even 2006.”

Best of all, this project gave Martínez a chance to engage herself with the history of the place she calls home in a way she never had before.

“My best friend went to Erasmus High School, the oldest public high school in the country. She walked the same halls as Barbra Streisand. Whenever they tear up home in a way she never had before.

“Mr. Demesmin has seen wave after wave of Brooklyn’s evolution—from the racial tensions and the rise of activism in the Haitian community in the late 1980s to the gentrification of the borough,” she says.

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**Doing the Math**

A professor keeps her passion for finding new ways to teach students about social justice at the center of her work.

**LAURIE RUBEL**, an associate professor in secondary education, says she became a teacher partly because of a strong need to contribute to society. Her work is her social activism, evident in City Digits, a project that she has spearheaded to design technology-infused mathematics curricula that investigates social justice themes in a local, urban context.

It started with a curriculum she and her team designed in 2013 called Local Lotto, in which high school students discuss games of chance, determine the probability of winning, and then record interviews with neighborhood shopkeepers who sell lottery tickets. They create digital maps based on their interviews and other data to analyze lottery spending as a percentage of income, combined neighborhood losses, and state profits. Rubel then developed a spinoff project, Cash City, a curriculum in which students investigate the use of pawnshops and the cost of doing business with them as compared to other financial institutions like banks.

The projects, both part of City Digits, are a collaboration between Brooklyn College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Civic Data Design Lab. The team received funding from the National Science Foundation.

“They push the envelope in terms of new kinds of learning opportunities for youth and their teachers,” says Rubel, who is careful to note that participants are encouraged to notice patterns rather than to pass judgment. “We’re trying to give them ways to think about the financial institutions in our city and how they are distributed.”

In the fall 2015 semester, Rubel was a CUNY Distinguished Fellow at the Graduate Center’s Research Collaborative, and was recently awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to teach and conduct research at Tel Aviv University in Israel, where she received her master’s degree in mathematics education some 20 years ago. She will be there during the spring 2017 semester, collaborating with faculty members who, she says, once inspired her, and with Israeli mathematics teachers on integrating themes of community and social justice into their practice.

—Jennifer Simmons

**Revolutionary Artist**

**HÉLÈNE AYLON ’60**

**Honorated with Lifetime Achievement Award**

Her art has pushed the boundaries of religious, environmental, and political issues.

**ELÈNE AYLON ’60,** a visual artist whose career has spanned five decades, was presented with a 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Women’s Caucus for Art. She joins luminaries like Yoko Ono, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Judy Chicago in accepting the award that recognizes the contribution of women to the arts and society.

“It’s nice to know that what I deemed important over my lifetime was noticed and appreciated,” she says.

Aylon grew up in Borough Park as the daughter of an Orthodox Jewish family, married when she was 18, and had two children before she enrolled at Brooklyn College at the age of 26. She was heavily influenced by abstract expressionist painter and professor Ad Reinhardt.

Her husband died the year after she graduated, but she charged on, becoming a renowned conceptual installation performance artist and ecofeminist. She has produced art that both reflects and challenges the religion she grew up in, as well as environmental, political, and gender issues. Perhaps her best-known work, “The Liberation of G-d,” is an installation that includes the Five Books of Moses covered in vellum with misogynistic passages highlighted in pink.

“I got lots of hate letters, most of which were not signed,” she says. “But I also got lots of love letters from women who wept and said, ‘Thank God you did this.’”

A few years ago, Aylon published a memoir, Whatever Is Contained Must Be Revealed: My Jewish Orthodox Girlhood, My Life as a Feminist Artist (The Feminist Press, 2012). Her art has appeared in the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Jewish Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Andy Warhol Museum, among other venues.

—Jennifer Simmons

**Apprentice Professor Laurie Rubel guides high school students in investigating social themes. Their research is used to create digital maps, like this one designed by Sarah Williams, MIT’s Civic Data Design Lab and the City Digits team.**

**Other members of the Syngnathidae family of fish that have the unique characteristic referred to as “male pregnancy” are the leafy seadragon, below.**

**Biologist Professor Tony Wilson and International Research Team Unravel the Genetic Basis of Male Pregnancy**

The study of male pregnancy in seahorses has broad implications for understanding pregnancy in all animals.

Seahorses have a unique mode of reproduction: male pregnancy, which closely resembles the pregnancy of female mammals, including humans. Biology Professor **TONY WILSON** and an international team of researchers have taken a major step toward answering the question of whether the structures of complex reproductive systems, like the seahorse’s, reflect a common genetic architecture.

The team, which included researchers from City University of New York (CUNY), the University of Zurich in Switzerland, and the University of Sydney in Australia, published their findings in Molecular Biology and Evolution.

Male seahorses carry offspring in specialized brooding organs, providing protection, gas exchange, osmoregulation, and nutrients to offspring during their development. While the male brood pouch is functionally equivalent to the mammalian uterus, it is the result of a separate evolutionary experiment lasting more than 50 million years. “We were interested in understanding just how seahorse pregnancy takes place,” says Wilson, an evolutionary biologist whose research focuses on how and why animals reproduce.

Wilson and his colleagues tracked gene activity in the brood pouch of pot-bellied seahorses (Hippocampus abdominalis) over the duration of pregnancy.

They identified genetic changes associated with critical morphological and physiological processes in the male brood pouch, including tissue remodeling and embryo implantation, nutrient and waste transport, gas exchange, and immunological protection.

Systematic comparisons between the genes active in the male brood pouch during pregnancy and those responsible for other highly developed forms of internal reproduction in mammals, reptiles, and fishes revealed that many of the key genes are identical across species, a result that suggests the existence of a common evolutionary tool kit associated with internal reproduction.

Wilson and his team are currently studying the genetic regulation of reproduction in species with more rudimentary forms of male pregnancy. “The seahorse system offers an opportunity to study evolution in action,” and to identify specific genetic changes associated with the development of pregnancy in this group,” says Wilson.

—Enerto Mora

**Pot-bellied seahorse (Hippocampus abdominalis)**
Portraits of Displacement

Artist Meghan Keane ’07 has channeled her love of portraiture into a project that sheds light on the plight of Colombian refugees displaced by violence.

The series of portraits in Displacement, a solo exhibition by MEGHAN KEANE ’07 that debuted this past spring at Equity Gallery in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, tells only part of the story of Colombian refugees fleeing ongoing violence outside of the capital city of Bogotá. It is by looking at the paintings, life-size figures rendered in rich jewel-tones, along with the accompanying photographs and video of people posing while Keane paints them, that we get the fuller story that displacement is not synonymous with victimhood for these refugees. “My intention was to treat them with dignity. I know I’m not going to ‘solve’ their problems,” says Keane. “However, I also know that painting is a way of being honorific.”

The Displacement project got started in 2013, when Keane traveled to Colombia to visit anthropologist Sebastián Ramírez Hernández, and his wife, and Keane’s fellow Brooklyn College alumna, Leah Golubchick ’08. Ramírez Hernández was doing anthropological research in Colombia in cooperation with an organization called Fundación Colombia Nuevos Horizontes (FCNH). Run by a former refugee, Marino Rivera, the foundation provides food, temporary housing, and social services guidance to people who have been forced to flee their homes because of violence.

Keane, who is fluent in Spanish, visited the foundation with Ramírez Hernández and Golubchick and led a painting workshop with its residents. On her way home, she realized that she couldn’t just walk away from the connections she had made with the refugees. “I asked Sebastián, ‘Can I do a painting project with them? Would that be helpful to your dissertation project?’ He was open to the idea. I was lucky enough to pick up an interior design gig that July that paid for my trip.”

Keane and her advisor, Professor Archie Rand, received a grant from Brooklyn College, from which she graduated in 2007, summa cum laude. She has kept in close touch with her alma mater, returning to the campus to participate in undergraduate critiques and maintaining an ongoing and exploratory printmaking practice as a lab mentor at the Brooklyn College Printshop (she also prints at Kathy Caraccio Printing Studio in midtown Manhattan).

“I have always stayed in touch with the professors that impacted me the most,” says Keane. “Now, as I have become a peer of sorts, I frequently get invited to come in as a visiting alum who shares ideas and insight with the students.”

If the portraits are a record of Keane’s time with her subjects, the photographs and film taken of her as she paints the portraits tell something else. “There’s this relationship that emerges between the artist and the sitter. We share a sustained moment in time and when I do these paintings,” says Keane.

Seeing the Displacement series paintings, and witnessing how honored the sitters were at the gallery show in Bogotá at an opening held specifically for the refugees, Keane fully realized the power of what painting can do for people. “It seems hokey to say, ‘Art can change lives.’ I would never be so presumptuous to make that assertion for any artwork. But seeing what happens when you do choose to honor someone or invite someone into your practice is powerful.”

—Audrey Peterson

Over a five-year period, Presidential Professor ARCHIE RAND of the Art Department created a series of 613 paintings based on the biblical commandments of the Torah, works that have been compiled in his latest book, The 613 (Blue Rider Press, 2015), a recent editor’s pick by the New York Times Book Review.

In the 640-page volume, Rand turns the exhaustive list of commandments—gathered from the Torah in the Middle Ages by Jewish scholars—on their head, painting them into ordinary, secular settings. In the process, he reveals the often sacred elements of daily life.

“Working on this project, I was looking at the styles of the American comic artists of the 1940s and 1950s, who were the Jewish inventors of this visual language,” Rand says, referring to the intellectual innovator Will Eisner, the creator of The Spirit comic book series, but also others such as Jules Feiffer, Stan Lee (Marvel comics) and Will Elder (EC comics and MAD magazine). Rand believes they have influenced every artist of his generation.

A Brooklyn native, Rand had his first individual exhibit at New York’s Tibor de Nagy Gallery in 1966. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Cinegraphics from Pratt Institute in 1970, after having previously studied at the Art Students League of New York under the abstract painter Larry Poons. Rand has had over 100 solo shows and 200 group exhibitions since, both in the United States and abroad. His paintings, graphic works, and books can be found in collections in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum in New York City, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, among others.

Although Rand is nonobservant, his work is suffused with religious themes and imagery. He has sometimes worked in sacred spaces, including B’nai Yosef Synagogue in Brooklyn, where his 1974 murals still illuminate the walls. And while some may criticize his work for being too religious—consider his series on the 19 blessings of the Amidah prayer and the 54 paintings of the divisions of the Torah—he has created images profane enough to have earned jeers from more pious critics. Still, he continues to marry the temporal with the spiritual.

Rand, who lives with his wife Maria in an old converted church in Sunset Park that is filled wall-to-wall with his paintings, explains his most recent project this way. “The 613 is an afternoon date for coffee where the sacred and profane can check each other out.”

—Ernesto Mora

Professor Archie Rand’s paintings, which interpret the biblical commandments of the Torah through a secular lens, have been published in his book The 613 (Rider Press).
There are not many people who can say that they have directed over 600 episodes of situation comedies, including beloved classics like Laverne & Shirley, Boom Bubbles, Mark & Mandy, Perfect Strangers, Full House, Step, and Family Matters, and as well as shows like The Jamie Fox Show, Two and a Half Men, Girl Meets World, The Suite Life on Deck, Shark, The Class, and House and many others. But, Joel Zwick ’62, ’68 M.A., is one of the few who can.

An accomplished director best known for his blockbuster, critically acclaimed, Big Fat Greek Wedding, Zwick has also directed several Broadway productions, including the musical Dance With Me (which he also choreographed), and for which he won the 1975 Tony Award for choreography) and George Gershwin Alone. He credits Brooklyn College with giving him the verve he needed to start him down his path to success. “What Brooklyn College instilled in me is an ethic of diligence,” said Zwick, who had every intention of becoming a doctor when he enrolled at the college, but was led into the arts after receiving advice from a classmate, Dominic Chianese ’61, best known for playing Corrado “Junior” Soprano on the HBO series, The Sopranos. He suggested that theater, television, and radio might be a better fit for him.

Zwick’s friend, collaborator, and fellow artist Victor Bardack ’62 agrees. “Brooklyn College is the immigrant haven. I was part of the first generation of kids of the people who came over from Eastern Europe and our parents knew that the only way to make it in America was through education and hard work.”

Victor Bardack is president of Argus Entertainment, Inc., a multimedia production company. He is also the writer/producer of the award-winning thriller Rocket’s Red Glare, and the popular comedy The Gumshoe Kid. No stranger to theater, Bardack, along with his collaborator Edward Michael Bell, also writes and produces plays, including Franklin & Jefferson: Sex, Politics, and the American Revolution, and I Like Ike.

Neither Zwick nor Bardack knew each other until after they each established their footing in the entertainment industry. “We’ve been good friends a number of years,” Bardack said. “And we’ve had the opportunity to work on a few projects together.”

In the midst of their success, Zwick and Bardack remain loyal to the institution that they credit with giving them the gumption to achieve what might have initially seemed unachievable.

Zwick, a founding donor of the Brooklyn College Barry R. Feinstein Graduate School of Cinema at Steiner Studios and a generous supporter of the college, established the Brooklyn College Joel Zwick Scholarship in 1995, and the Joel ’62 and Candice Zwick Scholarship in 2014. Bardack, who, along with generous donations from his housemates in the DuBois House, dedicated a bench overlooking the Brooklyn College Lily Pond in the name of his old House Plan, shares a similar experience. He had spent several years as a successful dentist before pursuing his passion in the entertainment industry.

Zwick and Bardack most recently worked together on a play entitled Hillary and Monica, which premiered at the Odyssey Theater in Los Angeles this spring. It is a tale of two playwrights, Ben Rose and Pete Raphael, in dire straits who decide to write a stage production about Hillary Clinton and Monica Lewinsky as a way to earn quick money. In the process, they learn as much about each other’s flaws and secrets as those they are writing about. The play was written by Bardack, along with Edward Michael Bell, and directed by Zwick.

“It’s really about two writers who are desperate for a payday, the tensions between them, and how they attempt to tell a story from the headlines without getting sued. It’s a snapshot of their lives, failures, and insecurities,” says Bardack. Aside from his work with Disney and Netflix, Zwick is currently working on the musical Hope Holmes, which explores the relationship between Sherlock Holmes and his creator, Arthur Conan Doyle. His book, Directing the Sitcom: Joel Zwick’s Steps for Success (McFarland & Company Publishing), was released on July 6.

In 2014, he and Bardack are also working together on two romantic comedies for the big screen, one called The Summer Before Forever and the other, currently in development, It’s Her, Not Me. —Robert Jones, Jr.

Assistant Professor Jennifer Drake, Ph.D., was named the “Rising Star” by the Board of Directors of the Association for Psychological Science.

Professor Louis Mainline of the Department of Psychology was recently named a “Rising Star” by the Board of Directors of the Association for Psychological Science.

Professor Louise Mainline of the Department of Psychology was awarded $529,968 over a three-year period by the National Science Foundation to test an innovative, cost-effective method, Peer-Assisted Team Research (PATR) that will involve more students in undergraduate research experiences earlier in college, improving their scientific reasoning abilities and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) self-efficacy.

Professor Poster Hirsch of the Department of Film served as the host of the first Flagstaff Film Fest Nov. Festival.

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This past year, Brooklyn College received a $1.5 million dollar gift from the estate of Samuel H. Gottlieb ’90, who recognized that a robust library is the foundation of any college. In honor of his gift, the fourth-floor Multipurpose Room has been renamed the Sam and Bernice Gottlieb Reading Room. The Gottlieb funds will support a variety of essential needs in the library.

In 1935, Brooklyn College was established as the first public, coeducational, liberal arts college in the City of New York. The Georgian-style buildings were designed by architect Randolph Evans. The library, with its gold-and-white clock tower, was conceived as the centerpiece of the new, tree-lined campus, and would become the signature building of the college.

“No college today can become great while its library remains small,” wrote the college’s first chief librarian, Asa Don Dickinson (1931–1944). Since officially opening its doors in the fall of 1937, the library has continued to evolve as an essential hub of campus life and scholarly endeavors. With one million print materials and close to 70,000 electronic books and journals, it is also home to extensive archives.

The library’s development has been steady over the years. An extension to the original building opened in August 1959, which included an open floor plan, and student and faculty lounges. Housed in LaGuardia Hall, named for New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, the library was renamed the Harry D. Gideonse Library in 1983, in honor of Brooklyn College President Harry D. Gideonse (1939–1966). Renovations were completed in 2002, and the new library complex included the Gideonse Extension, LaGuardia Hall, and a new wing. At that time, it housed over 21 miles of shelving and had 6.5 acres of floor space, seating over 2,000 patrons, as well as classrooms, study rooms, computer labs, and the Woody Tanger Auditorium. A 24/7 Library Café, the gift of technology and investment executive Morton Topfer ’59 and his wife, Angela, is located in nearby Whitehead Hall.

Under the leadership of President Karen L. Gould, the library has continued to evolve as an essential hub of campus life and scholarly endeavors. In honor of the naming of the Sam and Bernice Gottlieb Reading Room at the Brooklyn College Library, we look at the evolution of the Brooklyn College Library.

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Repeat Champions: Women’s Basketball Wins Back-to-Back ECAC Titles

Earning the No. 1 seed to once again host the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Division III Metro/Upstate Championships, the Brooklyn College women’s basketball team did not disappoint the Bulldogs faithful, winning their second ECAC Division III Metro/Upstate Championship in a row. In the semifinals of the postseason tournament, the Bulldogs rolled to a 65-40 victory against No. 4-seed Centenary College. This would lead to a fourth showdown in the championship game with CUNYAC rival, the College of Staten Island Dolphins, whom the Bulldogs had recently defeated in the City University of New York Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) Championships semifinals. The Bulldogs would beat the Dolphins for the third time that season, 59-55, to continue their reign as ECAC Division III Metro/Upstate champions. Sophomore guard Karen Mak was named the tournament’s Most Outstanding Player. In the championship game, Mak would finish with a well-rounded line of 17 points, ten rebounds, four assists, and eight steals. “Winning this championship was an amazing experience,” said Mak of her team’s accomplishment. “I feel honored to have been named Most Outstanding Player, but know that I owe this accomplishment to my teammates and coaches for pushing me and supporting me. I am so excited and confident going into next season with my team all back.”

The Bulldogs received the No. 1 seed in the ECAC tournament after advancing to the CUNYAC championship game for the second year in a row as the No. 2 seed. Brooklyn College finished the 2015–2016 season with a final overall record of 21-8 for their fifth 20-plus-win season in a row. It was also the third time in four seasons that the team played in the CUNYAC title game. Despite having no seniors on the roster, the Bulldogs began conference play with a perfect 8-0 record through the front end of the two-game regular season series with each opponent. Following the regular season, junior forward Olivia Colbert would be named a First Team CUNYAC All-Star in her first season as a Bulldog.

—Tim Slakas
Brooklyn Men’s Basketball Wins CUNYAC Championship/NCAA Tournament Berth

In a rematch of last year’s CUNYAC Championship game, the 2015-2016 Brooklyn College men’s basketball team would avenge last year’s loss by defeating Baruch this time around, 76-67, for their first City University of New York Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) title and automatic berth to the NCAA Division III Tournament since the 2009-2010 season. Brooklyn senior forward Lorenzo Williams was named the CUNYAC Tournament’s Most Outstanding Player, scoring his 1000th point as a Bulldog in the championship game. “We are just so happy with the championship win,” said junior guard and Australian native Chris McIlhatton.

Despite falling in their first-round game of the NCAA Tournament to local foe, New York University, the Bulldogs ended the season with a stellar margin—a single point. Jean-Baptiste finished his BC career with 1,847.

Cheerleading Wins Fourth Consecutive CUNYAC Crown and 10th Overall

Wrapping up a championship season for Brooklyn College winter sports, the Bulldogs’ cheerleading squad won their fourth City University of New York Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) title in a row. It is the program’s tenth championship in the last 11 years. The Bulldogs topped Lehman and John Jay for this year’s championship, outscoring their team competitors 204.7 to 192 and 182.5, respectively. Brooklyn’s Stunt Group of Jessie Ancona, Kenashallee Clark, Loylia Barnaby, Joanna Kozak and Nick Trudden took first place in that competition as well. Junior Nislette Cianciotta took second place in the jump competition. Sophomore Loylia Barnaby was named CUNYAC Performer of the Year, while Head Coach Tonika Simmons earned Coach of the Year honors.

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Egzon Gjonbalaj Passes Richard Jean-Baptiste as All-Time Leading Scorer in Brooklyn Men's College Basketball History

Senior Egzon Gjonbalaj capped off an incredible senior season, highlighted by a CUNYAC championship, by surpassing Richard Jean-Baptiste as Brooklyn College’s men’s basketball’s all-time leading scorer with 1848 career points. Gjonbalaj needed every last point to break the record, as he edged Jean-Baptiste by the slimmest of margins—a single point. Jean-Baptiste finished his BC career with 1847.

As the season came to a close, Gjonbalaj needed 20 points to break the record entering an NCAA Tournament first-round contest versus NYU, in what turned out to be the team’s last game of the season, suffering an 86-67 defeat. Gjonbalaj scored 11 points in the first half and seemed to be easily on pace, but the clock wound down to 3:11 remaining before he’d score the record-breaking basket, making for a dramatic finish.

“Becoming the all-time leading scorer at Brooklyn College is an achievement that never crossed my mind when I entered the school as a freshman,” said Gjonbalaj. “Now that I’m number one on a list that includes some great players, I can see that my hard work really paid off.”

Some of those on the all-time leading scoring list actually had a big part in Gjonbalaj’s accomplishment. Rich Micalef, the team’s head coach for the past two seasons, is the third all-time leading scorer with 1740 points, while Jeffrey Jean-Baptiste, an assistant coach with the team, is the fifth all-time leading scorer with 1482. Jeffrey is the older brother of Richard Jean-Baptiste, who held the record from 2010 until Gjonbalaj broke it this past season.

“I am so proud of all of Egzon’s achievements at Brooklyn College, moreover what he has meant to our program,” said Micalef.

In addition to the scoring record, Gjonbalaj was able to cap off the season by being named to play in the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) Division II Senior All-Star Game down in Salem, Virginia, at the site of the Division II Final Four. Gjonbalaj was named to the team after winning a fan poll on D3Hoops.com.

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History

Baptiste as All-Time Leading Scorer

Egzon Gjonbalaj Passes Richard Jean-Baptiste as All-Time Leading Scorer

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CUNYAC All-Stars

Fall 2015

Women’s Cross Country

Sportmanship Team: Ashley Brown

Men’s Cross Country

Sportmanship Team: Jonathan Ho

Women’s Soccer

Defensive Player of the Year: Jasmine Fermin (7 goals – 1 game winning goal, 2 assists, 16 points)

Second Team All-Star: Shani Nkhiid-Schuster (5 goals – 1 game winning goal, 1 assist, 11 points)

Second Team All-Star: Leslie Gomez (1 goal – 1 game winning goal, 3 assists, 5 points)

Sportmanship Team: Rebecca Hartman

Men’s Soccer

First Team All-Star: Valentin Kharkov (10 goals – 5 game winning goals, 4 assists, 24 points)

Second Team All-Star: Marco Thimm (6 goals – 1 game winning goal, 1 assist, 17 points)

Second Team All-Star: Kevin Brown (1 goal, 2 points)

Sportmanship Team: Kryshyn Boguski

Women’s Tennis

All-Star: Irenegovia Konienko (7-3 singles record, 5-4 doubles record)

All-Star: Suraya Masihov (7-5 singles record, 5-4 doubles record)

Second Team All-Star: Chloe Butler (211 kills, 10 service aces, 108 digs, 69 blocks)

Sportmanship team: Sasha Bozpathan

Winter 2015–2016

Women’s Basketball

First Team: Olivia Colbert (24.8 points per game, 11.2 rebounds per game, 45 steals, 22 blocks)

Sportmanship Team: Tiffany Ruiz

Men’s Basketball

First Team: Egzon Gjonbalaj (22.7 points per game, 11.3 rebounds per game, 4.0 assists per game, .9 steals, .9 blocks)

First Team: Lorenzo Williams (29.1 points per game, 5.6 rebounds per game, 2.0 assists per game, 18 blocks, 3 blocks)

Second Team: Jamel Gist (16.2 points per game, 3.8 rebounds per game, 3.3 assists per game, 39 steals, 5 blocks)

Sportmanship Team: Dennis Balasam

Women’s Swimming

Performer of the Year: Amanda Stryo Led BC to a third straight CUNYAC Championship in 2015.

All Star: Valerie Vasiliou (Silver Medalist at CUNYAC Championships – 100M Freestyle)

Men’s Swimming

Sportmanship Team: Kevin Barron

Rookie of the Year: Vaughn Titus (289 kills, 42 service aces, 193 digs, 26 blocks)
On Art, Inspiration, and Making a Difference

With just $25 a month, Brooklyn teacher Mera Rubell ’65 and her physician husband, Don, began feeding their passion for “crazy” art. That passion would grow into the Rubell Family Collection, one of the largest privately owned contemporary art collections in the world.

“Brooklyn is not a borough; Brooklyn is a blood type,” she says. Her earliest memory is of a German displacement camp after WWII. Her family emigrated to America when she was 12 years old. After graduating from Brooklyn College with a degree in psychology, she went on to earn a master’s degree in education at Long Island University. While a senior studying at the Brooklyn College Library, she met her husband, who had already graduated from Cornell. He proposed to her the first time they spoke, and they married in 1964.

While her husband was in medical school, she became a teacher for Head Start, then taught in the New York City public school system. Between work and study, the couple would take long walks in their Chelsea neighborhood and visit storefront studios there. On a payment plan of $25 per week they began purchasing works that intrigued them. They were the “crazy couple who bought this crazy art,” Rubell told W magazine in 2015.

Today, the same passion for emerging artists and their work anchors the Rubell Family Collection (RFC) and Contemporary Arts Foundation, nearly 7,000 works of art by more than 800 artists—one of the largest privately owned contemporary art collections in the world.

Ever since Mera and Don met in the Brooklyn College library while she was pursuing her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, she has remained strongly connected to her alma mater. Earlier this year, she and her husband hosted a reception for Miami area alumni, and in May 2015, she represented the Brooklyn College Anniversary Class of 1965 at the baccalaureate commencement ceremony.

The Rubell Family Collection, one of the largest privately owned collections in the world, was established by Mera and Don Rubell. The collection, which features more than 250 works by African-American artists that the Rubells collected over a 40-year period, has been seen by over a million people in 12 museums across the country. No Man’s Land, which includes work by more than 100 women artists, will open in September 2016 at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C.

Since their move to Miami 26 years ago, the Rubells have helped greatly in making the city an international art destination by courting Art Basel in Switzerland to bring the prestigious art fair to Miami in 2002. Reflecting on her own path and her time at Brooklyn College, Rubell says, “Standing at the podium and looking at the faces of the students, I felt like I was in a similar place more than 50 years ago. I was a first-generation immigrant graduate going out into the world with a lot of family support but not much in the way of financial resources. I felt the power of a college education, especially a free one, which I had. Free was very powerful for me. If it hadn’t been free, I don’t know if I would have gone. My mother-in-law was in the first graduating class of Brooklyn College. Her son was an Ivy League graduate, and he married a woman, me, who had a similar education to his own mother’s. I’m concerned about education moving away from being free. It closes the door on a lot of talented people.”

“People are going to ask you what college you went to. Say it proudly. Feel the vibe. Feel the pride. It’s the kind of respect you get when you are the first in your family to graduate from college,” Rubell said to the graduating class of 2015. “It’s the kind of respect you get when you have to hold down a few jobs just to go to school. It is the kind of respect you get for having the courage against all odds when you are surrounded by debt, doubt, and fear. It’s the kind of respect you get for knowing that falling down is okay, but staying down is not. It’s the kind of respect you get because you are desperate, desperate to make a difference in the world.”

—Audrey Peterson
Out and About

1. Brooklyn College Theater Department
Brooklyn College theater students perform in Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts.

2. Magner Career Center
Students on a company visit to Madison Square Garden courtesy of the Magner Career Center.

3. Best of Brooklyn 2016
Harveys Par-B-B-Q
catered, with President Evan S. Speier, and the hardworking staff seated at the annual Best of Brooklyn gala held at the Harveys Ballroom in Manhattan.

4. Brooklyn College Women’s Initiative
Women students meet with successful, mostly alumnae, professionals in their fields at a mentor lunch.

5. Schrijneman Lecture in Integrative Biology: Martijn Schreuder, Ph.D., and Huy V. Vu, assistant professor, Department of Biology, Brooklyn College.

6. Brooklyn College Food Pantry:
Dean of Students Ronald Jackman, front row, second from left, with President Karen L. Gould, faculty, staff, and students at the opening of a food pantry.

7. Brooklyn College Theater Department
A scene from the play Belleville, by Queens College Professor Amy Herzog, directed by Eric D. Ort ’16 M.F.A.

8. Magner Internship Stipend:
Marger Magner ’69, center, with the 2016 awardees of the Magner Internship Stipend.

9-10. Brooklyn College Theater Department: The Rhythm Method
Morgan Jones, directed by M.A. major Mark MacDuffie ’16, and Denise Alyce Mott
Andrews, by Professor Ron Barron Brandt at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts.

11. Alumni Bowling Night
Brooklyn College alumni enjoy an evening out at Frames Bowling Lounge in New York City.

12. Alumni Association Distinguished Speaker Program:
Lori Schwartz ’01, 2011 BCAA Alumnus of the Year and former N.Y.C. Deputy Transportation Commissioner and Chief Engineer for the City of New York, launches the new Brooklyn College Alumni Association Distinguished Speaker program at the CUNY Graduate Center.

13. Murray Koppelman School of Business
Dean Willie Hopkins, back row, third from left, with President Karen L. Gould, center, and students at the Murray Koppelman School of Business at Brooklyn College in Brooklyn, New York.

14. Brooklyn College Food Pantry:
Dean of Students Ronald Jackman, front row, second from left, with President Karen L. Gould, center, students, and other members of the Brooklyn College administration.

15. Brooklyn College Women’s Initiative:
Women students meet with women—mostly alumnae successful in their fields—at a mentor lunch.

16. Brooklyn College Food Pantry:
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Dean of Students Ronald Jackman, front row, second from left, with President Karen L. Gould, center, students, and other members of the Brooklyn College administration.
Dear Alumni,
In 2013, the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) conducted a national survey of business and nonprofit leaders entitled “It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success.” The report found that 95 percent of the employers surveyed said they gave hiring preference to college graduates with skills that will enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace, with 92 percent agreeing that “innovation is essential” to their organization’s continued success.

When identifying suitable candidates, 93 percent of surveyed employers said that a demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than a candidate’s undergraduate major, and 90 percent said it is important that those who hire demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity; intercultural skills; and the capacity for continued new learning.

These survey findings align with the mission of Brooklyn College, which seeks to develop knowledgeable, critical thinkers prepared to think critically, lead responsibly, act ethically and contribute globally. Brooklyn College, which seeks to develop knowledgeable students prepared to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than a candidate’s undergraduate major, and 90 percent said it is important that those who hire demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity; intercultural skills; and the capacity for continued new learning.

In service,
Jeffrey Sigler ‘92, ’95 M.S.
—Jamilah Simmons

To view the TEDxCUNY talks, visit tedcxuny.com/2014/videos/1/
Leadership in Law Award
New York, was presented with the
Can Heart Association Grant-in-aid.
was awarded an Ameri-
various Caribbean countries.
Education, Science, and Sports of the
The Sunshine Awards recognize
the Sunshine Awards Hall of Fame.
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Survivors include Marilyn, his wife of 57 years, as well as their children: Mark (Mary), his son, and Susan (Bill), his daughter.

Mark Zemunik
Into and Out of the Archives

The chandeliers and wooden card catalog files seen here in this image of the LaGuardia Reading Room at the Brooklyn College Library have long been replaced by modern lighting and computer databases. Yet this 1940 snapshot remains. It is a vital glimpse into our college’s past, carefully maintained, along with thousands of other photographs, artifacts, papers, and other ephemera, in the library’s Archives and Special Collections division.

Committed to preserving records that document the Brooklyn College community and the Borough of Brooklyn, the archive staff welcomes materials from alumni and other individuals, particularly of national and social importance. “We are in the process of creating a collection development policy,” says college archivist and Associate Professor Colleen Bradley-Sanders, who notes that the guidelines will better help potential donors decide if Brooklyn College is the right fit for their collection.

One of the highlights of the archives is a collection of rare books dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and covering history, medicine, anthropology, geography, and other subjects. The archives also feature the papers of American humorist Sam Levenson ’34, politician Shirley Chisholm ’46, playwright and author Ira Shaw ’34, and the Hank Kaplan Boxing Archive, one of the largest on boxing history—but acquisitions are not limited to those of noted persons, academic rarities, or antiques.

Smaller collections play an important role. “Casual snapshots from alumni that show what Brooklyn College life was at the time they attended can be just as important in illuminating the history of the college and the borough as scholarly collections,” says Associate Archivist Marianne Labatto.

Assistance with research in the archives and special collections is available to all Brooklyn College students, alumni, faculty, and administrators, as well as other members of the CUNY community. Access is also available to outside researchers, writers, and students with prior permission from a library archivist.

—Audrey Peterson

For further information about the Archives and Special Collections at Brooklyn College, please contact Professor Colleen Bradley-Sanders at C.Bradley-Sanders17@brooklyn.cuny.edu, or call 718.951.5346.

The archivists at the Brooklyn College Library want to include your memories in the library annals. Musings about your time at the college are welcome. Share with us at magazine@brooklyn.cuny.edu or Brooklyn College, 2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11210

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