Reopened this spring after extensive renovation, the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College has received generous support from donors to sponsor new initiatives and programs. One of the first initiatives to benefit is the Joan H. Tisch Legacy Project, made possible with a $1.2 million five-year grant from the children of New York City humanitarian activist, Joan Hyman Tisch. Urban public health issues, from diseases such as HIV/AIDS, obesity, and diabetes to health disparities due to economic and environmental factors, will be the focus of the new multidisciplinary initiative at Hunter College named in honor of Mrs. Tisch.

Speaking on behalf of her brothers, Academy Award-winning producer Steven Tisch, and Loews Corp. Co-Chairman Jonathan Tisch, philanthropist and activist Laurie Tisch said, “we need to address these and other issues, and we need to do so with a comprehensive strategy. This is the overarching mission of the project at Hunter College that my brothers and I are proud to create in honor of our mother.”

The components to the new program include:

- Joan H. Tisch Distinguished Fellow in Public Health to be awarded annually to a prominent health-care professional with real-world public policy experience.

- Joan H. Tisch Public Health Forum, an annual symposium focusing on public health issues, including HIV/AIDS, obesity, diabetes, environmental health, health problems associated with poverty and aging, and public mental health.

- Joan H. Tisch Community Health Prize, a $10,000 award to be presented each year to an individual or community health organization for distinguished accomplishment in the field of urban public health.

“Joan Tisch is already a deeply admired and respected champion in the fight against AIDS and HIV, here in New York and globally,” said Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab. “We are deeply honored that Steve, Laurie, and Jon have chosen our institution to further and expand her unparalleled legacy.”

Dr. John McDonough is the inaugural distinguished fellow in public health at the institute. He teaches a graduate course on the politics and policy of health care reform, leads an interdisciplinary faculty seminar dealing with current public health issues and serve as scholar-in-residence.