The Board of Trustees visited legislators and representatives of the Governor’s office in Albany on March 9 and 10 to discuss the proposed State Budget and major University initiatives. The delegation included college presidents and representatives from the chancellorship who, together with the Trustees, met with key leaders such as Assemblyman Edward Sullivan, Chairman of the State Assembly Committee on Higher Education, seen here with Board Chairwoman Anne A. Paolucci, and Senator Kenneth P. LaValle, Chairman of the State Senate Committee on Higher Education, pictured here with Interim Chancellor Christoph M. Kimmich.

Photos, Colleen Broscia.

PRIZE TO TWO CUNY HISTORIANS

Following Pulitzer’s Advice

Condense, condense!” was the constant admonition of Joseph Pulitzer to the reporters on his New York World. One learns about this pioneering newspaper—with its snappy stories, multi-column banners, numerous illustrations (the first half-tones ever in a City paper), and “breezy and colloquial style”—in a section of Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898 (Oxford, 1999) titled “Pulitzer’s World.”

Ironically, Gotham’s authors, history professors Edwin G. Burrows of Brooklyn College and Mike Wallace of John Jay College, are now themselves residents of Pulitzer’s world. On April 12, the Pulitzer Board, which convenes at Columbia University, announced that Burrows and Wallace will receive the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for history. CUNY Matters readers will recall their preview of Gotham’s pleasures last summer, a guided tour of early Coney Island.

The real irony, however, is that, even though Gotham is a very large a book—69 chapters and 1,382 pages—Pulitzer would have been pleased. For Burrows and Wallace, achieve a real feat of condensation, embracing nearly three centuries of what the authors justly call “New York’s mammoth story.”

Board Chairwoman Anne Paolucci responded happily, “It is a superb work, and we at CUNY are delighted to have its authors teaching in our Colleges.” “It seems fitting,” added Interim Chancellor Christoph Kimmich, that Burrows and Wallace “have written a seminal historical work on New York City while teaching at CUNY—itself a vital force in our city’s history and success.”

Burrows and Wallace note, with pun intended, that Pulitzer’s New York World was a “prize example of the new order” of mass commercial culture. Their massive study now becomes a prize example of the City University’s contribution to knowledge of Gotham, which you will learn on page xii of the book (originally meant “goats’ town”) in Anglo-Saxon and was first applied to New York City by Washington Irving in his Salmagundi papers of 1807.

The Pulitzer Prize for music this year was awarded to former Hunter College assistant professor of music Melinda Wagner for her “Concerto for Flute, Strings, and Percussion.”

NURTURING THE CREATIVE TRANSCRIPT

Art + Anthropology Psychology + Math = CUNY BA/BS

Frances Madeson profiles two award-winning students who exemplify the mission and modus operandi of the CUNY Baccalaureate Program headquartered at the Graduate School and University Center.

Hey, CUNY BA! This exceedingly short poem serves as the supportive cry of a special group of peripatetic undergraduates as they greet each other with hugs on the far-flung campuses of CUNY’s 17 colleges and at the University Center. For a strong bond has developed among these students as they maneuver through the educational adventure that is the CUNY Baccalaureate Program.

Increasing enrollments in the CUNY Baccalaureate Program are in fact promising to ruin its “best kept secret” status. This year 1500 students have joined 550 others already in the Program to take advantage of the expansive freedom of choice, flexibility, individualized attention, and opportunities for specialization uniquely available to them. These self-selecting students, from remarkably diverse backgrounds, almost uniformly become forceful and passionate advocates of the Program, often referring to their participation as “life-changing.”

The Program permits these highly motivated students to work innovatively with faculty mentors and graduate student advisors in shaping their Bachelor’s degree curriculum to their unique professional or academic goals. This may entail an unusually penetrating focus within a discipline, a creative combination of multiple disciplines, or even thoughtful probing for the opening to new disciplines altogether. In other words, goody-goody Botany, hello “The Anthropology of Medical Plants.” Farewell Music, hail “Musical Performing Arts in Medieval Europe.” Adieu English and !bola! “Bilingual Creative Writing.”

Among other remarkable Areas of Concentration of present and past CUNY BA/BS students are Media Arts in Education, Food in a Cultural Context, Human Movement Studies for the Disabled, Public Relations By and For Women, and Eastern Religions: The Discipline of Body and Spirit.

This singular program makes the extraordinary resources at all CUNY facilities available to its students, and, upon successful completion of the Program’s rigorous academic requirements, a University degree is conferred.

This year the Director of the Program, Professor Nan Bauer-Maglin, points with pride to the fact that two CUNY BA June graduates are among the fourteen CUNY-wide winners of coveted Belle Zeller Scholarships (awarded for high GPA and outstanding community service). In addition, these two have been awarded Thomas W. Smith Academic Fellowships, which are available only to CUNY RVBS enrollees.

Born in Jamaica, 22-year-old Julia Wilson learned about the Program from her academic counselor at Medgar Evers College during her freshman year. A senior now, she prizes the moment she became aware the Program would allow her to pursue equally and fully her two loves, psychology and mathematics. In particular, Wilson was eager to explore the psychological reasons for math phobia, as well as the mental characteristics which generate extraordinary math aptitude. She knew she had to master both disciplines.

Continued on page 9

IN THIS ISSUE

This recent CUNY Baccalaureate Program grad began taking college courses in 1934; read about him on page 12 and about the Program in the story above. To the right is a 1921 charcoal portrait of America’s greatest early 20th-century dramatist; a major conference on him will take place in May at Baruch College (see page 11).
President Schmeller to Retire

P
tured below, early in his astonishing tenure as President of Queens-
borough Community College, is Dr. Kurt R. Schmeller. The 12th Annual Partners for Progress Awards Dinner on April 22, sponsored by the QCC Fund, served as the formal celebration of Schmeller's retirement, which he has announced will take place this August.

Currently the longest-tenured president of any public college or university in the nation, Schmeller assumed the leadership of Queensborough in August 1969 at the age of 29. Before arriving at the Bayside, Queens, campus, he taught history and assisted the President of the University of Wisconsin.

Among the highlights of three decades at the campus in Bayside, Queens, was the development of the Laser and Fiber Optics Technology Program (one of the few in the country and the only one in New York with State Education Department approval), the largest Clinical Nursing Program in the metropolitan area, and the largest and finest Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology programs in the region.

Also established on his watch have been the model External Education Program for the Homebound and the Holocaust Resource Center and Archives, which serves as the headquarters for the International Association of Holocaust Organizations.

Schmeller also founded and has served as chair of the QCC Fund, the College's main fund-raising entity.

Working closely with campus architects, Schmeller oversaw the completion of the College's Master Plan with the construction of nine buildings on the 34-acre campus. Since 1969, enrollment has increased from 5,000 to nearly 10,500 matriculated students and an additional 5,000 students enrolled in non-credit continuing education classes.

Sophie Davis Program Enriches Community-Based Health Care

H
is semester 51 fourth-year stu-
dents of the Sophie Davis School of
Biomedical Education/CUNY Medical School donned white jackets and joined teams of health professionals at eight community-based health centers in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. These students are participating in a unique five-year BS/MD program located at City College, where, during their fourth year, they are getting an early exposure to the varieties of primary care offered in ambulatory, clinical settings.

This new clinical program, funded by a three-year grant of $1.05 million grant from the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, was developed by Marthe Gold, MD, MPH, Chair of the School's Department of Community Health and Social Medicine. Tanya Pagan-Ragno, MD, MPH, an Associate Medical Professor, is the Course Director of the Introduction to Primary Care Practice, which includes this field experience for the Sophie Davis students.

The School's Dean, Stanford A. Roman, Jr. MD, applauds the new program as one that reinforces the School's mission to train physicians for New York's underserved communities and to give students an earlier introduction to clinical medicine.

Now in its 26th year, the Sophie Davis School offers 350 students a unique program that integrates an undergradu-
ate education with the first two years of medical school. Students complete the final two years of medical training at one of six cooperating New York State medical schools. The Sophie Davis mission is to increase accessibility to careers in medicine for inner-city youth of New York City—especially minorities under-represented in the medical profession—and to train primary-care physicians who commit themselves to practice in medically underserved communities.

Tanveer Gaibi is one of five students (pictured here) who were assigned to the William F. Ryan Community Health Center on West 97th Street, which serves patients in Manhattan Valley, West Harlem, and other sections of the Upper West Side. He enthusiastically described how the interactions with the medical staff at the center and a chance to meet patients has put a real face on a career he has pursued over the past eight years only in classrooms and labs. “Our teacher at the Ryan Center helped us understand the importance of being culturally sensitive in providing health care in the community. We had a chance to talk to some patients and learn the appropriate way to take a medical history,” Gaibi says, referring to Daniel Baxter, MD, the Center’s Director of Adult Medicine and HIV Services.

“Dr. Baxter talked to us about how community-based health centers play a really important role, by using the right language and images, to reach out to and encourage ethnically diverse community members to use its services.” Gaibi explained. “We discussed why showing an awareness and appreciation of different alternative medi-
cines—acupuncture, for instance—can lessen the fear some community members may have of accepting our services.”

Gaibi, a resident of Jackson Heights and Hillcrest H.S. grad, participated in his high school pre-med program and in the Sophie Davis School’s Bridge to Medicine Program at York College. This is a rigorous, year-long course in chemistry, math and English for high school seniors interested in pursuing medical careers. Gaibi plans to complete his final two years of medical school at the SUNY Health Science Center at Syracuse after graduating from Sophie Davis in June 2000.

Any of the 1,100 Sophie Davis graduates are now general or geriatric internists, pediatricians, obstetricians/gynecologists, or family physicians, most of whom are now practicing in New York State. Its 40% enrollment of under-represented minorities represents a diversity unparalleled at other State medical schools.

The Macy Foundation grant has allowed the School to work with community-based health centers to develop a unique clinical “campus” system where students can gain firsthand experience of the particular needs of medically under-served populations, notably those that often suffer hypertension, diabetes, and asthma.

In addition to the Ryan Center, the program has collaborating centers in the Bedford-Stuyvesant and Sunset Park neigh-
SOME INDIVIDUAL CUNY BENEFACTORS
From Generoso to General To Just Plain Generous

By Peter S. Taback

When Eva Bobrow gives gifts, she doesn't bother with wrapping paper—at least when she is mulling a little something for her alma mater. Make that almae matres. For Ms. Bobrow is a graduate of Queensborough Community College and the CUNY Baccalaureate Program (most of her classes were at Queens College), and she sees her educational largesse as the repayment of one kindness with another.

“When I got through with my first degree, my studies were cost-free,” I told myself, ‘I can’t take this for nothing…whatever I got for nothing, I’m returning to the College.’ So now I contribute upwards of $10,000 a year to Queensborough.”

Bobrow has earned the affection of everyone at Queensborough. She enrolled there in 1966, 44 years after dropping out of high school, and she completed her first Associate in Applied Science degree in 1972 while working as a legal secretary. She then went on to earn two more Associates—in Liberal Arts and Science—before going on to graduate summa cum laude in Business/Accounting in 1985.

Her financial generosity alone would distinguish this Queensborough triple-degree holder, but Bobrow gives her time with equal zeal. Now well into her 90s, she has been a volunteer tutor in accounting, participated in the College’s 65-Plus Club, and has served as President and Secretary of the Queensborough chapter of Alpha Beta Gamma, the National Business Honor Society for junior colleges. (The chapter has established the Eva Bobrow Medallion of Excellence in her honor.)

A donor with Eva Bobrow’s special history cracks the gift-giving mold at the City University. Far more typical, and perhaps higher-profile, is the support CUNY receives from nearly every prominent philanthropy, foundation, and governmental funding agency in New York State and the nation. Given CUNY’s size and the diversity of its faculty research interests, this is hardly a surprise.

Still, it is always interesting, even intriguing, when a gift is extended to a University campus with a real live hand and when there is an actual face behind it. Some individual gifts may be of jaw-dropping magnitude—think of $30 million Pﬁfferman Hall at the Borough of Manhattan Community College or the $18 million Zicklin gift for Baruch’s School of Business—but no gift to the University is unimportant or fails to be gratefully received. A remarkable range of individuals, including local residents, alumni, and completely unafﬁliated partisans of public education in New York City, also donate to CUNY colleges, often with an idiosyncratic stamp that marks a particular gift according to the donor’s wishes—and sometimes even their dreams.

Bobrow’s ardent exposure to Queensborough’s students alerted her to the College’s acute need for programming and academic support. That’s where her checkbook came in. And she likes to see her dividends first-hand: still a presence on campus, Bobrow has helped to stymy the effects of ﬁscal neglect across the Queensborough campus—from the Holocaust Resource Center, the Art Gallery, and the campus Learning Center (now emblazoned with her name) to many student scholarship funds.

Explaining how she targets her giving, she says, “There are certain monies that don’t come from the City or the State, and somebody has to provide them.” To support would-be orphaned programs and initiatives, Bobrow adds, “I feel that this money should come from people like myself.”

Other recent examples of carefully deliberated giving to CUNY deserve note. Consider, for example, Milton Fisher, a lawyer still in practice in Manhattan. He is a 1938 graduate of Brooklyn College who found a way to honor his alma mater and his fellow Old Guard classmates simultaneously.

He has endowed the Milton Fisher Second Harvest Award, which allows Brooklyn College alumni, long after they’ve repaid their student loans and made their careers, to compete for a special privilege. The winner earns the right to direct a $5,000 check from Fisher to the College program of his or her choice. “I was inspired at my 50th reunion that there was so much more left in life,” Fisher said. “I wanted to do something to remind people that we’re not dead yet, when we’re 75, 85, 90 years old.”

That’s why the Fisher Second Harvest Award only honors the accomplishments achieved after the 50th-reunion year: contenders may mention only current activities on their application. For instance, 1998's Second Harvest recipient was a retired physician, Dr. Nathan Cedars, Class of ’39. He won for devising a program to bring medical support to low-income families in Texas. Upon winning the Award, Dr. Cedars handed Fisher’s check over to the Brooklyn College Chemistry Department to support scholarships for Chemistry majors attending evening classes, as he himself did more than 60 years ago. The Women’s Center and Gideonse Library have also been designated by previous Second Harvest Award winners.

Why not award money himself, directly to Brooklyn College? “Well,” Fisher considered, “money is not such a big thing at this stage in life. But the right to designate money to the College we all love, that’s something else.”

Perhaps the best-known recent alumni donor is the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, Class of ’58. Together with his sister Marilyn P. Berns, Powell endowed the Maude and Luther Powell America's Promise Scholarship Fund at City College to honor their parents. Another gift to City College has come from Lois Pope, widow of the late publisher Generoso Pope, and the LIFE Foundation to create a scholarship under the America’s Promise rubric.

Both of these awards will reflect Powell’s commitment to community service, which he has termed “America’s Promise.” The LIFE Foundation scholarship will honor New York City high school seniors who plan to attend CCNY’s Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education and are outstanding in studies and community service. General Powell and Mrs. Pope will award both of these scholarships annually.

Because it is recognized as a local resource with a hand in countless success stories such as General Powell’s, CUNY has always received its share of disposable income from grateful alumni. But growing awareness of the debilitating shrinkage of government funding for CUNY’s outstanding academic programming has stimulated increased giving.

This has even encouraged individuals with no prior CUNY connection to give. “In the last several years, many of our colleges have received funding from alumni and others who value the service CUNY provides in the winner of this University-wide competition. Each year’s winner is eligible to enter the national Chopin competition, to be held in the Spring of 2000, where further support from the Council’s Keyboard Scholarship Fund will greet the winner.”

Family ties frequently motivate gifts to the University, as was the case for an endowment to the Graduate School and University Center from the Cairns Family Foundation. This will make possible dissertation awards in the Ph.D. Program in Linguistics. Charles Cairns is a Professor in the Program and at Queens College, and he established the endowment in honor of his father, Stewart Scott Cairns, whose first academic position was at Queens College.

Thomas W. Smith, on the other hand, had no prior affiliation with CUNY when he appeared with a desire to support the CUNY Baccalaureate Program. He expressed profound respect for the enterprise of CUNY’s students and found a way to reach a core group of the University’s best for support.

“They’re an interesting polyglot,” Smith said of the academic fellows he supports through the CUNY BA/BS. “All kinds of

“I applied to New York University and The City University... NYU cost $750 a year; CCNY cost $10. That was the end of that.”

—General Colin Powell
Confronting Prejudice On Austrian Soil

Sondra Perl. Professor of English at Lehman College and the Graduate School and winner of the Carnegie Foundation's New York State Teacher of the Year Award in 1986, is currently working on a memoir about how her classes in City College's M.A. program in Education for Austrian English and Mathematics teachers brought her students—and herself—to face to face with prejudice. A preview from her work in progress follows here.

On a Monday morning in January 1996. I received a phone call from out of the blue. It came from Professor Susan Weil, who, along with City College Dean Alfred Posamentier, was coordinating a cross-cultural literacy program at City College. Weil wondered if I would consider spending a few summer weeks in Austria teaching two Americans and nine Austrians, all but one of whom would be practicing teachers of English. Though enrolled in a CUNY Master's program in Language and Literacy, these teachers would never attend class in New York. Instead, the program allowed for City University faculty to teach in Austria in three- to four-week blocks. I would be working with a group in Innsbruck.

It sounded fascinating. "Interested?" I was initially elated and responded, barely able to conceal my excitement, "You have no idea how often I've dreamed of working with teachers in a foreign country. If the dates work and my family agrees to do without me, sure, I'd love to!"

I had no inkling the invitation was about to accept would change my life. Only after I put the phone down did doubts begin to creep in. Austria. I asked myself, "What have I done?" It's not the teaching that troubled me; it's the place. For what I did not say to Susan Weil was this: Although I learned to combine teaching with travel, my imagined trips always took me to France or Spain. India or Japan. Germany was the last place on earth I wanted to go. Austria a close second. It was a journey into alien territory—Hitler's birthplace—and a journey into the territory of my own prejudice. But soon I was in Innsbruck. Sitting before me in a classroom were teachers whose parents or grandparents might have cheered for Hitler. Many of them served in his army, and some have been ardent supporters. Were their children any different? I wondered. If they knew I was Jewish, would it affect our work together? Could I even raise such questions aloud? If no, and even more to the point, did I want to? For, as liberal as my background was, I was raised to believe Germans are evil and Austrians no different. Underneath their culture and politics, underneath their accomplishments in science, art and philosophy, I was taught, lies an unsurpassed capacity for cruelty. Hidden beneath the surface of their lives, I had been told, lie Nazis in disguise.

Such thoughts haunted me as my two classes began in Innsbruck, one on the teaching of writing and the other on the teaching of literature. As I often do, I began in a relaxed and informal way by asking the teachers to write and recite a bit about their experiences with writing. The room was soon filled with memories of early attempts to write.

Max, who taught business at the University of Innsbruck, vividly recounted the harsh criticism he received at the hands of a professor. Margret, an English teacher in a local high school, recalled how the correction of papers at the university was frequently a pretext for professional one-upmanship. Very few memories were happy ones. Most of the teachers admitted they associated writing with struggle and pain and did not do it very often. Their most common memory: being judged and failing short. I was pleased to hear them speak so honestly but not with their palpable sense of defeat.

"Isn't there another way?" pleaded Alex, an American whose parents were German. "There is," I promised. "There are ways to make writing come alive so that each person's voice counts—so that writing becomes much more than what students do wrong. Tonight was just a start, but can you already begin to see what's different here?"

Some answered. Instead, the teachers rapped their knuckles on the seminar table, which made me flinch. "Did I say something wrong?" I wondered aloud. It was a relief to learn that this is how Austrian students express their pleasure. But would they have rapped the table so enthusiastically, I puzzled, if they knew I was Jewish.

On our second evening we began our discussion of literature by discussing what we know about ourselves as readers. Then we focused on a pre-assigned text, Vito Perrone's A Letter to Teachers. Perrone invites readers to consider the meaning and purpose of teaching, asking "What do we most want our students to come to understand as a result of their schooling?" He then articulates a clear and hopeful vision of what is possible in the classroom: "If we saw the development of active inquirers as a major goal, much that now exists—workbooks and textbooks, predetermined curriculum, reductive, teaching to tests—would I believe, begin to fade. Teachers would be free to address the world, to make living in the world a larger part of the curriculum."

I had hoped to explore these statements with the Austrian teachers, but they were struck by something Perrone writes on his very first page: "Education at its best is first and foremost a moral and intellectual endeavor." Tentatively, at first, someone asked, "What does this mean? Do you honestly think education is connected to morality?" "Of course I do!" was my silent answer. "How could education not be connected to morality?" But I sensed a need to move slowly here: I needed to understand why these teachers were asking this question.

I did not recognize then that we had just struck a chord that would resonate among us for the next few years. That knowledge would come later. At the time, I only knew that I was truly surprised by their surprise. "Do most of you have this question?" I asked, noticing several affirmative nods. The teachers then accepted my suggestion to break into small discussion groups, but these served only to reinforce their assumptions. What they said repeatedly to me and to one another were versions of the following: "Teachers here are taught not to speak about what they believe. . . . We can't deal with morality in the classroom. "This is not our way," said Gerlinde, a teacher-trainer at a local teachers' institute, "We have been trained to keep ourselves and our values outside of the curriculum."

Before I could even attempt a response, the teachers reasserted their collective commitment to what they called "moral neutrality."

I found myself faced with a dilemma. If I accepted their claim, I would collude in perpetuating their unexamined views. If I challenged them, I would become one more professor imposing an unwelcome or threatening point of view. Ultimately, I saw only one solution: to raise the question of what it means to be "moral" and "neutral." Then and to inquire into what words mean, not only for them and their history but also for me as their professor and as someone who finds being on Austrian soil an unsettling experience.

And this is what I did, slowly at first, in this course and then, seven months later, when I returned to guide them in methods of classroom research, and again when I returned in my role as mentor for their M.A. theses. What began as a curriculum focused on the teaching of literature and writing became an inquiry into the philosophy of teaching. Should teachers bring an ethical stance into the classroom? To do so, mustn't one inquire into the nature of one's own values and how they were constructed? Can we, as a group, discover the roots of prejudice in our own lives? Ultimately, we found ourselves interrogating our own ethics and moral convictions.

Such inquiry is risky. Not everyone welcomed it. At first, only one teacher, Margret, embraced my questions and added her own: "How can we not answer our professor's questions? How can we avoid talking about the fascism in our land, our country, our blood? How can we not teach our children who they are and be willing to take the beating of the world? We are the generation that must respond. Our parents..."

Continued on page 11
“How Now, Thou Core of Envy!”

Flora Kimmich offers an overview of a pioneering—and thriving—CUNY core curriculum as it nears its 20th anniversary.

Thus says Achilles in Troilus and Cressida, and it is not kindly meant! No, he is doing what Shakespeare’s characters do with greater panache than any other playwrights: hurling an insult. (This one, richly deserved, is aimed at “deformed and scurrilous” Thersites.) One can be pardoned for deliberately misreading the line—the Bard has suffered this before—and turning it into a compliment. For the phrasing neatly captures the pride Brooklyn College takes in its Core Curriculum, the oldest such baccalaureate program in the CUNY system and a Core deserving of envy.

The Core amazes for at least three reasons: because putting in place a fixed and universal 10-course requirement is, in itself, an enormous feat, because nearly 20 years after its founding, the Core still commands the loyalty of faculty and students alike; and (most triumphantly) because it has transformed campus life by reorienting and uniting a long-serving tenured faculty into a proactive as any at CUNY, linking separate disciplines and departments, and bringing 12,000 undergraduates together around a common body of reading.

Like so many educational innovations, the Core Curriculum, which dates from 1981, was made possible by a concatenation of events. First, the College responded to ballooning enrollments in the early 1970s by dividing into six schools: Humanities, Science, Social Science, Education, Performing Arts, and the New School of Liberal Arts. Then, beginning about five years later, deep cuts in enrollment, funding, and personnel disoriented the College and demoralized the community. Reset by fragmenting and longing for greater unity of purpose and a restored sense of direction, the joint faculties of the six schools resolved to institute a single college-wide core curriculum and uniform baccalaureate requirements. An elected faculty panel set out on what would become a three-year labor of coursework design.

Meanwhile, still demoralized and now in crisis, the College passed in 1979 to an energetic new president, Robert Hess, whose mandate and avowed purpose were a return to a unified administrative structure.

But when the core committee reported back and proposed a compromise package of distribution requirements and some existing courses, the faculty, after acrimonious debate, soundly rejected the proposal and elected a new committee, which it instructed to present at least two models for a core, and be as full and rational as that committee returned, in short order, with three models: (1) a conventional distribution core of existing courses; (2) a mandatory set of existing courses; and (3) an articulated set of ten new courses to be required of every student. The committee’s sympathies lay decidedly with the third model.

The committee had begun its deliberations—in the words of Classics professor Ethylle Wolfe, a member of the committee, former Dean of Humanities, and one of the great Core proponents—by “hammering out a consensus on what we believed all holders of the Brooklyn College baccalaureate degree should have in common by the time of graduation.” This exercise established an intellectual goal that already implied the content of the projected curriculum.

The committee then undertook to design a program integrated both horizontally by cross-references (for example, from Homer’s Achilles to Shakespeare’s Troilus, 2000 years later) and vertically by progressively more challenging content and complexity. The program envisioned would address both the contemporary world and that world’s cumulative antecedent heritage, striking a judicious balance between western and non-western traditions. Finally, this core would be disciplinary, inter- or multi-disciplinary, and modular.

The committee agreed on a core of ten courses arranged in a two-tier sequence, the latter drawing upon and extending beyond the former (see sidebar). The two-tier arrangement intended both order and flexibility: it would guide students in the timing of their Core courses without, however, requiring that certain courses be taken within a designated time period. “One of our most provident decisions,” observes Wolfe, “was to label the new courses Core Studies 1 through 10, so that they are by birthright considered College offerings, not an individual department’s property.”

Having drafted the core program of its own design, the committee then enlisted the entire campus community in developing syllabi for its work-in-progress. From that moment, the Core curriculum became the project and property of the College faculty. “I cannot recapture for you,” Wolfe recalls with pleasure, “the excitement . . . of our meetings with faculty and department chairs, as decisions were forged about the content and structure of the courses in a core embracing different modes.”

Interim Chancellor Christoph Kimmich, then chair of the History Department, recalls that Sherman Van Solkema, professor of music and chair of the Core committee, came to visit him twice. Van Solkema spoke about the possibility of a course, not on Europe or America between one date and another, but on The West. Utterly tired of History 1 through 4, Department members sat up and listened: before their eyes, Van Solkema was opening the prospect of a new, tight, mandated sequence of courses on main issues of the liberal arts.

Kimmich also recalls that, at a crucial meeting of Faculty Council, as the College stood poised before a decision of great consequence, President Hess, who had prudently held back and left discussion of curricular reform to the faculty, said in effect, “We can do better.” He carried the day. The Faculty Council adopted the committee’s third and most rigorous model, the mandatory ten-course core arranged in articulated sequence. There followed, as the final step in establishing the Core, two weeks of public hearings, in which 400 faculty members—and not just those expecting to teach Core courses—discussed and debated the objectives and reading list, the gaps and interconnections of one particular Core course each evening. Thus, the entire faculty joined once more in constructing what would become the foundational learning experience of every Brooklyn College undergraduate.

That nearly 20 years later the Core lives on robustly may be attributed in large measure to mechanisms for constant revision and renewal built into the program. The most dramatically effective of these is the College-Wide Faculty Seminar, which convenes each summer to discuss texts, teaching techniques, and purposes of Core courses. Since the first seminar—which lives in the memory of some as a moment of being born again—faculty, including those who do not teach Core courses, have discovered one another and (paradoxically) another’s disciplines here . . . and sometimes have even rediscovered their own disciplines and the joys of teaching.

The Core thrives, finally, because it has transformed Brooklyn College. It has brought new youth to the faculty and a renaissance of teaching and learning, prompting more than one full professor to rethink and reshape his area of specialization to better fit one of the Core’s courses.

Ten courses taken by all students and taught by half the faculty have produced a pedagogical coherence that changes student lives and sets in motion whole waves of institutional change. Students who read the same texts become allies and colleagues. They find refuge in one another as they move beyond their own families and ethnic communities, where attending college is often unheard of, and toward full integration into the American mainstream.

The reform that produced the Core has necessarily entailed reform of elective offerings and of prescriptions for particular academic majors. Block programming, which first appeared in the Core, has appeared again in Brooklyn’s award-winning Freshman Year Program and in its revised, reconstituted, and extended honors programs, now gathered under the aegis of an Honors Academy. A program in Writing Across the Core, integrated into every Core course, focuses the entire campus on writing skills, and its good effects reach into elective courses and departmental courses. From Writing Across the Core and the honors programs has sprung a veritable peer-tutoring industry, located in the Learning Center. Here undergraduates sit down one-on-one with writing tutors who gather in groups of seven to ten for sessions that supplement eight of the ten Core courses.

The Core has also produced a crop of specially tailored textbooks, composed by Core faculty for Core courses, some of which are nationally recognized. Among them are People, Power and Politics (Simon & Schuster), a monumental two-volume collection by the Department of

Core of the Big Apple

**FIRST TIER**

- **Core Studies 1**: Classical Origins of Western Culture
- **Core Studies 2**: Introduction to Art (2.1) and Introduction to Music (2.2)
- **Core Studies 3**: People, Power, Politics
- **Core Studies 4**: The Shaping of the Modern World
- **Core Studies 5**: Introduction to Mathematical Reasoning & Computer Programming

**SECOND TIER**

- **Core Studies 6**: Landmarks of Literature
- **Core Studies 7**: Science in Modern Life: Chemistry (7.1) and Physics (7.2)
- **Core Studies 8**: Science in Modern Life: Biology (8.1) and Geology (8.2)
- **Core Studies 9**: Studies in African, Asian, and Latin American Cultures
- **Core Studies 10**: Knowledge, Existence, and Values

Continued on page 8
Marcus Garvey's Son
In a LaGuardia Classroom

By Bryant Mason

Marcus Garvey, Jr.—son of one of the early 20th century’s most outspoken proponents of black economic self-reliance and the “back to Africa” return of skilled people to initiate nation-building—declares mathematics is the mother of all the sciences. And he strives to awaken this awareness in students in every class he teaches at LaGuardia Community College, where he is an adjunct professor of mathematics and statistics.

In fact, Garvey is so focused on math theory and problems that many students pass through his class without ever hearing about their prof’s famous dad. That story, he believes, does not have an obvious place on a math syllabus.

Garvey, who has retired from a career of advanced research as an electrical engineer in the defense industry, says he teaches because he understands and likes students: “If you look at people and see nothing in common with them, it’s extremely difficult to relate to them,” adding “and you certainly can’t teach them!”

Garvey’s strongly partisan opinion about mathematics derives logically enough from his many years of witnessing the infusion of science into everybody’s life. “Students use all kinds of marvelous devices—earphone radios, camcorders, cellular phones, beepers, and digital TV—and they like them,” adding “and you certainly can’t teach them!”

Garvey’s career has just appeared in conjunction with his famed father, who has a park named for him in Harlem and a street in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Marcus Garvey Sr. (1887-1940) was a Jamaican immigrant who galvanized the thinking of black Americans more than 80 years ago. Among his central tenets was the need for political self-determination and for the development of an exemplary, independent African nation. Garvey’s charismatic style notably produced the pioneering Universal Negro Improvement Organization (UNIA), whose parades of uniformed divisions, corps, and legions celebrated Africa and racial pride.

Criss-crossing America organizing the UNIA between 1916 and 1925, the elder Garvey urged, “There shall be no solution to this race problem until you yourselves strike the blow for liberty.” The UNIA won broad support in New York’s black community, and Garvey quickly gained national and international prominence. Within a year, chapters were created throughout the U.S., in Central and South America, the West Indies, West Africa—even in England and Canada.

Garvey widely encouraged entrepreneurship 80 years ago, before blacks thought it whole new meaning,” says Garvey, who relishes the challenge of linking mathematics to the wider world.

The 68-year-old Garvey, who graduated from City College in 1977 with Master’s degrees in physics and electrical engineering, sometimes focuses on the architectural achievements of ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations. Sometimes he alludes to what early builders knew—the Egyptians with their pyramids, the Greeks with their columns, lintels, and sloping rafters, the Romans’ expertise at constructing arches over columns—and sometimes to what they did not yet know. The concept of “minus” for example: “The concept of minus is employed everywhere today... we use it when referring to ambient temperature, cash flow, or, metaphorically, to a simple slacking of effort,” Garvey says.

Garvey believes his appreciation of science and technology was passed on to him by his famed father, who has a park named for him in Harlem and a street in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Marcus Garvey Sr. (1887-1940) was a Jamaican immigrant who galvanized the thinking of black Americans more than 80 years ago. Among his central tenets was the need for political self-determination and for the development of an exemplary, independent African nation. Garvey’s charismatic style notably produced the pioneering Universal Negro Improvement Organization (UNIA), whose parades of uniformed divisions, corps, and legions celebrated Africa and racial pride.

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Garvey widely encouraged entrepreneurship 80 years ago, before blacks thought it was a key to empowerment. The UNIA created the Negro Factories Corporation in 1918 to nurture black-owned businesses, among them a factory that made black dolls and employed 1,000 African Americans. The UNIA also published the weekly Negro World, which became the most widely distributed African diaspora periodical.

With obvious pride, the younger Garvey asserts, “Of all the black leaders we’ve had, no one so forcefully stated the need for African Americans to be in the forefront of science and technology as my father.” He notes, also, that his father was a voracious reader of African military history and concluded that “whenever Africans suffered defeats it was because of a ‘technological gap’ in weaponry.” Perhaps this view helped to shape Garvey, Jr.’s career of work on military projects.

In 1925, the political activist became embroiled in litigation on trumped-up charges of misusing the mail to sell stock in his Black Star Steamship Line (black competitors were not wanted in the shipping industry). Found guilty, he served two years of a five-year sentence, was deported, and died in ignominy at 53 years of age in London. Garvey Jr. was only nine at the time.

I believe my father was essentially a teacher. “He was always trying to instill a message of improvement. He wanted African Americans to have their own colleges and universities.”

This message is echoed by LaGuardia Professor Garvey has had a taste of presidential secrecy too—of his father’s Universal Negro Improvement Association from 1992—but, when in Long Island City, he prefers to keep his students’ eyes on the subject at hand. “In days of yore, relations with my students. I’m not here to teach mathematics and statistics... I’m not here to teach political ideology. That’s not my function!”

To order a copy of this booklet ($10 plus postage), phone 212-650-8766.
DAUGHTER OF A FAMOUS RUSSIAN POET

Lehman Prof Assumes Role of Stage Character

W

I've always known Pat was a character—but in a play? Lehman College Provost Rosanne Wille is speaking of the College's professor of women's studies and education Patricia Jones Thompson, and Thompson has indeed become a character in a play. And thereby hangs a typical New York tale—or, to be more specific, one of those amazingly coincidental Apartment Building Neighbor tales.

It begins with the French playwright Daniel Besnehard coming to live in a large complex in Washington Heights overlooking the Hudson River. He had long considered the Russian poet and playwright Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930) a kind of muse, and he was stunned to find the poet's presence looming large in the apartment of his neighbor, Professor Thompson. Imagine his stupification at learning that she was also Elena Vladimirovna Mayakowskaya—the poet's daughter! Mayakovsky met her mother, Elizaveta Petrovna, a beautiful 20-year-old Russian emigré married to an Englishman named Jones, when he visited America for several months in 1925.

Playwright and professor became close, and in time Besnehard wrote a play, Hudson River: Un désir d'exil ("A Longing for Exile"), about a gay Frenchman who lives in Manhattan with his African American lover and is visited by his family. A neighbor in his building is featured in the action. Her name is Pat, she is identified as a university professor and as Mayakovsky's daughter, and her father's poems are woven into the play. One of these poems is "Le pont de Brooklyn" from 1925. Thompson is also the play's dedicatee. "It's a blend of fact and fiction," she says, "I'm honored to have a play by such a talented creative artist dedicated to me."

The play's premiere took place at the Nouveau Théâtre in the medieval Loire Valley city of Angers on March 4, beginning a four-month regional tour that ends in Paris, and Thompson's presence created a sensation. While in Angers, Thompson spoke at the American (i.e. Carnegie) Library on her specialty, Hestian feminist theory.

She also presented to the Library copies of five of her nearly dozen books: Mayakovsky in Manhattan: A Love Story, Bringing Feminism Home, and Environmental Issues for the 21st Century.

What might Hestian theory be? The audience at a dramatic reading of Hudson River in English, which took place at New York's Alliance Française on April 19, found out. For in the play the character of Pat explains, "Hestian Feminism [is] named after the goddess Hestia. She embodies the domestic values of the home as opposed to Hermes, who symbolizes public and social space. . . . Hestian feminism is helping me to understand the contradictions between private and public life. Our aspiration—mine and my father's—was to revolutionize everyday life."

One other connection between Professor Thompson's academic career and the life of a father she saw again only once—briefly in Nice, when she was three—is poignant. In a "suicide" note (among artists, there were many forced suicides under Stalin at the time), Mayakovsky wrote of his "love boat" being "smashed on the daily grind [即] byt." Byt is a Russian word that can also be translated as "the established way of life" or "middle-class values," but in his life and writing byt represented the conflict between personal needs and the demands of society. This conflict has been the very focus of his daughter's research. Thompson has even described herself as "a theorist of byt."

LATEST "PERCENT FOR ART" DIVIDEND

Sonic Bloom Unfolds At New Lehman Center

Readers may recall when Surround-Sound was the cutting edge in movie theaters. Now artist Christopher Janney has brought the concept to the University's major new construction project. "Sonic Pass Blue" consists of a series of eight photo-electric sensors, eight speakers, and a polyphonic sound sampler. Together, these elements create an ever-changing series of "sound images" as people pass through the walkway.

The actual score is composed of melodic and environmental sounds, creating a sonic "portrait" of the natural landscape of the area and the neighboring New York Zoological Society. As in jazz improvisation, the sounds maintain a consonant relationship, but where and when they eminate depends on the time of day and the number of people within the space.

"My goal was to transform a mundane walkway into a dynamic icon and give people a sense of participating in that transformation," he says. Currently a visiting professor at Cooper Union, where he teaches an Advanced Concepts course on Sound as a Visual Medium.

"Christopher Janney's walkway is creating a real buzz," says President Ricardo R. Fernández. "It's a high-tech sensory experience that fits in very nicely with our ultra-modern new Technology Center." Formal dedication of the $13.5 million Center and "Sonic Pass Blue" took place on April 22.

The glass-enclosed walkway of Carman Hall on the Lehman campus, site of a new Information Technology Center and sound artist Christopher Janney's "Sonic Pass Blue." Photo, Zbig Jedrus.
From October 1997 to February 1998, the Japan Foundation and Japan Society co-presented an exhibition, “Japanese Theater in the World,” at the Society's Gallery near Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. This constituted the most comprehensive exhibit ever seen in the West of the accomplishments of Japanese theater. It ranged over fifteen centuries, focusing principally on the international cross-fertilization of Japanese and non-Japanese theater arts. A spectacularly illustrated catalogue, with the same title, was published in conjunction with the show (The Japan Society et al., 1997); its editor was Samuel Leiter, Professor of Theater at Brooklyn College. Among nearly a dozen essays on the major genres of Japanese theater are two contributed by another professor and chair of theater at the College, Benito Ortuñano. Professor Leiter offers here a description of some striking images from Japanese Theater in the World that capture aspects of three less well-known genres in Japanese stage history.

The Japanese theater, much as it might seem otherwise, has a long history of interrelationships with world theater. The earliest important form of Japanese theater—gigaku, which was essentially a masked dance—seems to have been imported from China during the 6th century, although the earliest record of performance in Japan dates from 612 a.d., when it was danced by a Korean named Mimashi. Gigaku, which exists now only in the form of much-altered lion dances, established dance as the foundation of all traditional Japanese theater. Even when relatively realistic dialogue drama, like that of the bugaku puppet theater and kabuki, appeared later, movement was informed by the rhythmic musical accompaniment.

The earliest classical dance form extant is bugaku (literally meaning “dance music”), which has long been preserved as the performing art of Japan’s imperial household. The scroll painting shown below is by Tsuruzawa Moriyuki (17??-1816) and shows a masked gigaku character from a work called Ks-Kyō-ō. An accompanying poem on the scroll charmingly expresses the hoped-for effect of bugaku on its audience: “As a flower trembles to a shining light, the dancer’s sleeves shimmer, lost in his own movement, we feel our spirits refreshed.”

No one is certain about the precise theatrical ancestry of Ks-Kyō-ō—possibly a Chinese legend about a bashōte prince who chose to make himself look as scary as possible in battle by wearing a fright mask, or a Chinese tale about the ghost of a king who helps his son in battle by wearing a dragon’s head, or even an Indian tale. The most popular of bugaku dances, it dates from the 8th century.

Bugaku is more ceremonious than dramatic, but the no theater, which arose in the 14th century, introduced powerful dramatic elements to create one of the world’s greatest theatrical forms. Alongside it developed the comic kyōgen theater, where ceremony took second place to humorous situations. No and kyōgen, originally popular arts, were appropriated by the samurai class, but the townspeople supplied their own urban commercial theater when they invented the remarkable puppet theater now known as bunraku and kabuki—both of them appearing around the turn of the 17th century, when Shakespeare was flourishing in London.

Bunraku and kabuki vied for popular favor until the late 19th century, influencing each other until kabuki finally triumphed and its rival went into commercial decline. In the bunraku performance shown top right, we see a famous history play, Chronicle of the Battle of Ichinotani. A general, faced with the opportunity to slay a youthful enemy, chooses—because of a secret obligation—to spare the boy and substitute his own son’s head for the eventual inspection by his lord. The general—seen at center on the platform—must control the situation when the head is shown simultaneously to his wife and the mother of the supposedly slain boy (they are seen to the left). The lord is on the right, with a fan. Each puppeteer is hidden behind black gauze headpieces.

During the Edo period ( 1603-1868), when kabuki and bunraku were at their peak, Japan was largely closed to the rest of the world. Outside influence was minimal. With the opening of Japan to the West in the 1850s—a process in which CUNY’s founder Townsend Harris played a significant part—Western influence became irresistible. Yet Japan managed to maintain many of its classical theater forms while adding new ones reflective of a changing world.

For example, plays in the Western vein were produced by specialists in modern drama (shingeki), allowing Japanese actors to present Ibsen, Chekhov, and Brecht, as well as indigenous dramatists like Kinoshita Junji and Mishima Yukio. These were mainly spoken dramas, and they relinquished traditional Japanese artistic techniques in favor of realism or other modern “isms.” But, as elsewhere, postwar artists grew disaffected with orthodox drama, and there arose a radical fringe theater called angura (from “underground”) that expressed the traumatic socio-political concerns of the younger generation.

Also springing up in the wake of what was for Japan the apocalyptic end of World War II was a form of dance theater called butō, which is often termed the “dance of darkness.” Butō stylists abandoned conventional aesthetic expectations as they expressed their horror at the post-atomic bomb world. All the old standards of beauty were discarded in what Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei calls the search for “a pre-civilized world, a world of romantic, mythic purity... Whatever is human, no matter how disgusting, is embraced.”

The artist best representing butō is the internationally renowned Ôno Kazuo, whose career has lasted into his nineties. He is pictured below in The Old Man and the Sea of 1990. With butō, Japanese theater, which moved away from dance in the modern era, has returned to its origins. Likewise, the Japanese theater has never been more international.
The Program “allowed me to carve out my area and detail the way I wanted to,” Wilson recalls. “I always envisioned following a course of study where I lay out the ground-rules, where I am fundamentally involved, and where I can’t procrastinate because I’ve set the goals.”

Working closely with her MEC mentors, Professors Thomas Edwards (Social and Behavioral Science) and Henry Ricardo (Mathematics), Wilson combined the most pertinent courses at her home college with more advanced math courses available at Brooklyn College. She speaks glowingly of her mentors’ help in strategically suggesting challenging courses, assuring she satisfies all the requirements, coaching her on the best choices for graduate study in her field. They also observed Wilson in class to make sure she extracted the utmost from her classroom time, sometimes staying after class to reinforce the more difficult lessons. And with graduation looming, they regularly monitor the progress of her graduate school applications.

In her almost daily contact with Edwards and Ricardo, whom Wilson has come to view as “guides in an academic treasure hunt,” she is reassured that she is on the right track. “They have assisted me in an absolute quest for excellence,” she says, warming to the subject, “I’m reaching for the ultimate star, my star.”

Wilson’s career aspirations are, not surprisingly, dual. She hopes to work both in a hospital and have a private therapeutic practice. She’s been studying for her GRES, and she’s applied to CUNY’s Graduate School, New York University, and Penn State (which has a Math-and-Psychology graduate program). Excited about graduation, she plans to take part in the CUNY Baccalaureate Commencement on June 7th. “I’m graduating,” she says with a blissful smile. “It all went by so fast!”

A 20-year-old Eva Fognell arrived from Sweden in 1980 intent on exploring the whole of the United States. She traveled widely, living in California, New Orleans, and Florida before arriving in New York City. One day, in her mid-30s, she woke up feeling for the first time, as she tells it, “like I was missing something important by not having had a formal education.”

She applied to CUNY, leaving the choice of school blank on the application form, and was assigned by chance to Baruch College. Fognell declares, “It was the best thing I’ve ever done in my entire life. School is now the main thing for me. It has become quite easy to say no to social engagements and other demands in order to stay home and study.”

Coming to school from jobs in the fashion industry and in catering, Fognell explains, “I was determined to spend my educational dollars wisely and with care.” She has never taken a course without first researching a professor’s publications and professional associations, at times arranging face-to-face meetings, observing classes and getting student and faculty recommendations. She began to notice that Liberal Arts classes were smaller at Baruch than at colleges with a Liberal Arts focus, and she enjoyed receiving more attention from her professors.

This self-starter’s commitment to planning her studies carefully made Fognell an ideal candidate for the Baccalaureate Program, where, she says, “students must be self-reliant, even have a certain doggedness to negotiate the landscape.”

Fognell became fascinated by the study of art and the makers of art, the ways art is received by society, and the meanings art possesses for specific cultures. Indeed, she was equally drawn to the disciplines of both Art History and Anthropology and her faculty mentors—Baruch Professors Virgil Bird (Fine and Performing Arts), David Maynard (Anthropology), and Glenn Peterson (Anthropology/Sociology)—have encouraged this interdisciplinary work.

“I am a Western art,” Fognell explains, “the links between art history and anthropology are more evident, as the art historian must necessarily be more dependent on the research of the anthropologist.” Her study projects have included learning how to read medieval visual artifacts as historical texts, an independent study course on how women were portrayed in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the tracking of Kwakiutl Indian artifacts over a 100-year period. Fognell appreciates that Anthropology can take her around the world investigating religious issues, while looking through the Art History lens, she can see “how religiosity is visually realized in different cultures.”

In addition to the Zeller and Smith honors, Fognell has also received a merit-based Provost’s Scholarship at Baruch for the last three years. Last Spring she was one of four women students over 35 years old honored by the Women’s Forum for academic excellence. She has also received the Tourbin Memorial Scholarship, whose awardees are nominated and selected by Baruch’s faculty. She has used some of the proceeds from these awards for travel to Central America and the Yucatan to study Mesoamerican art and artifacts. Last summer she toured extensively though Greece and Turkey “visiting every broken column in the Classical tradition.”

Fognell also supports herself by tutoring at Baruch in Art History and History. Besides reviewing lessons and student essays, some students need special help in understanding specific historical concepts. She explained, “A student from China, for instance, is unlikely to know what the Renaissance renewed or what the Reformation reformed.” As President in 1997-98 of Baruch’s chapter of Golden Key, a national honors society committed to community service, Fognell led distribution of Toys for Tots, literary tutoring in homeless shelters, participation in March of Dimes and New York Cares campaigns, and volunteered income tax assistance to low-income individuals and families.

Now in her undergraduate home stretch, Fognell is absorbed in an Honors Project that involves linking major Renaissance authors with particular works of Renaissance art. Fognell has sidled on her research in the form of a major exhibition of works by the Ferrarese court painter Dosso Dossi at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. “Ariosto’s poetry was a major source for Dossi and both artists worked with notions of play and parody,” she happily explained. Looking beyond commencement, Fognell has been accepted into the Graduate Program in Museum Studies at SUNY Cooperstown and has applied to several other schools.

Responses to Fognell’s explanations of the Baccalaureate Program to graduate schools and prospective employers have been uniformly positive, especially, she says, when the Program’s concept and mission are “placed in the context of recent budget cuts. It’s easy to make people see the point of it, increased focus and specialization on individual campuses.”

This insight is not lost on Director Bauer-Maglin, who noted, “It is fascinating, if not a little ironic, that a program—

Julia Wilson, center right, pictured with the Ishe Caribbean Performing Arts Ensemble of Kingston, Jamaica, with which she toured Europe and North America while a high school student. For a picture of Wilson in more ebullient mood, see p. 2. Eva Fognell in the research library of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she is working on her CUNY Baccalaureate Program honors project. Photo, Frances Madeson.
Making Sure the Hoops Dream Doesn’t Become anOops Dream

It’s Monday afternoon, March 29th, and in about six hours Duke and Connecticut cut will thrash out the NCAA basketball championship down in St. Petersburg. This lull before the final paroxysm of March Madness is the perfect moment for the Editor of CUNY•Matters to pull together his story on Dan Creange.

For, though Creange is the Treasurer and Special Assistant to the President at Baruch College, it quickly becomes clear, over lunch at a diner on Third Avenue, that his heart palpitates more over the free-throws line than the bottom line. Hoops are everywhere, though to look at Creange—he’s tall, lean, and has a silver-haired crescent—you’d think a brisk game of handball would be more his métier.

He’s of course a dedicated sports fan, and one of his three grown daughters played basketball all four years she was studying at Princeton. Around Baruch, which Creange began serving “a long time ago” as Chief Accountant, he has come to be known as Mr. Fix-it, a full-court prestidigitator skilled at turning “this can’t be done” into “this is what we could.” Aware of his interest in sports and facilitator’s talent, former Provost and now Interim President at Baruch, Lois Cronholm, appointed him to supervise the Baruch athletics program. Ask Creange how the basketball is and you will get (as did) a big smile—22-and-5 and Baruch’s first national ranking in the NCAA Division III, thank you—and an x-large College T-shirt that will make a nice one-piece pajama.

While other CUNY employees might at his age be contemplating the pleasures of basking in the accomplishments of his three daughters, the responsibilities of single-parenting the 12-year-old daughter still in the nest, and nurturing his retirement portfolio, Creange has taken a husman’s holiday from parenting to become the mentor and father-figure to dozens of young minority boys from some of the toughest neighborhoods of New York and New Jersey. Most all of them are basketball players “recruited” for the Creange team by two high school basketball coaches, Bob Hurley and Gary Greenberg, the Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County. A phone call and a voice saying, “Dan, I’ve got a boy here who could really use your help…”

Currently that stock portfolio—Creange says he is a pretty savvy inves-tor—is helping to pay tuition, buy books and clothing, teach some social graces, and open the cultural horizons (with the occasional Broadway show) of 14 boys from some very tough, in some cases downright horrific, home environments: poverty, drugs, guns, prostitution, domes-tic violence . . . the gamut.

Creange says it is crucial to intervene “when they are young, 10 to 12 . . . then you still have a chance to point them in the right direction.” And he has become adept at the threshold task of getting the boys respect, making his motives clear, and then, later, evading the dangers of being taken advantage of as a mere soft touch. “The tuition payments go directly to the parochial schools’ scholarship fund, and I almost never give cash out—then give something to wear—I see the jeans go on in the store.”

And education is made a constant issue. “I buy them books, and I demand they read them! And vocabulary. I want five new words a week.” Many of Creange’s charges are making their way up the educational ladder: two are now sophomores at Baruch, and others are in NCAA Division I basketball programs. He gives many hours over weekly to mentoring, advising, even accompanying students on campus recruiting visits. And sometimes dealing with crises: for instance, the boy who mysteriously called to say he would have to “miss prac-tice for a while.” Creange learned he had cut his hands disarming his drunken, knife-wielding father.

He calls them “his kids,” but mind you they are basketball players. Some have arm-spans vaguely reminiscent of a 6-52. But the diminutive Creange clearly has little trouble seeing eye to eye on the important issues, notably the need to have more than hoop dreams in their future.

Creange knows that inner-city youths spend much of their time out of school un-supervised and vulnerable to peer pres-sure, drugs, and the fast-money of crime. “They have no other options . . . and no hope. They are desperately in need of help. I’ll continue trying to make a difference in these kids’ lives, but we need more people like the Bob Hurleys and Gary Greenbergs and I could add some others like Maurice Hicks, a coach in Harlem, and Kevin Boyle, a coach in Elizabeth.”

Earn a bit about his past, and you be-gin to see why being a surrogated father for boys from the city’s toughest streets is his current game plan. He was raised in West New York by a single mother; he did not make the acquaintance of his father until he was 10 years old. “Even then, I never called him Dad or Pop.” And he knew poverty all too well, recalling with bemusement the time he wore three or four pieces of cardboard in his holey shoes to school one day and being praised by his teacher, “how you grown?”

The numerous objects of his philan-thropy, however, do sometimes cause him to exclaim “conflict of interest” discomfort. Who does he root for, for example, when St. Anthony’s H.S. in Jersey City (where he has seven students, four on varsity) plays against St. Patrick’s H.S. from Elizabeth (three on varsity)? And how does he cel-ebrate when Brooklyn’s Adelphi Academy (where the star player is one of his) ends St. Anthony’s 66-game winning streak—and where does he sit at these games? “Right in the middle—between the benches!” Creange laughs.

*Know of a CUNY faculty member, staff person, or student with an inter-esting “other” vocation or avocation who might be featured in OTHER LIVES? Send your suggestion to the Editor of CUNY•Matters.

10

In a church a Georgian prays for money to buy a car. Next to him, a Russian prays for half a litter of vodka. Finally, the Georgian gets annoyed and gives the Russian ten rubles: “Listen, get yourself a bottle and don’t bother God with trifles!”

The Russians’ need to vent their sense of failure has made them hide their “dis-grace” by inventing Chukchi jokes. Appearing at the time of growing Russian nationalism, with its claim that Russians are the most disadvantaged ethnic group in the former Soviet Union, Chukchi jokes portray a small and remote minority as intellectually inferior to Russians. However, the Chukchis of these jokes are not the real target. Used as a vehicle for political satirizing of the Soviet regime, they became a metaphor for under-dogs who are abused and fooled by fate, i.e. the Russians themselves. Here a Soviet journalist interviews a Chukchi man.

“Could you tell us briefly how you lived before the October Revo-lution?”

“Hungry and cold.”

“And how do you live now?”

“Hungry, cold, and with a feeling of deep gratitude.”

Continued on page 12
Eugene O'Neill deliberately chose 1912 as the play's era because it was a year personally depressing and at the same time politically exhilarating. It was the year in which he attempted suicide in a New York flophouse, but also the year of American socialism's most exciting moment—when Presidential candidate Eugene Debs obtained close to a million votes and dozens of Socialists were serving in Congress and state legislatures. The year in which the play was performed, 1946, was also a year of radical hope.

"It's 1919 all over again!" Partisan Review editor Philip Rahv exulted, just before the brutal realities of the cold war surfaced. Yet The Iceman Cometh presciently hinted that not only revolution but even radical politics itself must be seen as a misplaced dream, especially when activists themselves cannot tell the sometimes horrible truth about their own political motives.

The Iceman Cometh was a decade ahead of its times. Written in 1939, it captures exactly much of the reasoning that would be used by many writers and intellectuals in the McCarthy era to explain their retreat from radicalism. The relationship of democracy to authentic freedom troubled O'Neill as much as it did his heroes Emerson, Thoreau, and Nietzsche. And like the New England Transcendentalists, he could hardly see the American people behaving as though they were "free already" and could act with reflective self-knowledge rather than "quiet desperation."

O'Neill once confessed that Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra "has influenced me more than any book I've ever read." O'Neill, too, understood that the will cannot will backwards and hence the past cannot be changed. Happiness may be impossible when we cannot completely unburden ourselves of our own history, but the capacity to live historically gives life its tragic justification. "Life is good because it is painful," wrote Nietzsche, and the American playwright elevated pain into a noble emotion, quite a feat in a country dedicated to pleasure and the pursuit of happiness. With O'Neill we are, at last, aware that truth—today an idea so ridiculed that it appears within inverted commas—bears precisely on what actually occurred in the past, and the more the hurt the more the truth. The challenge of O'Neill's mind was to master what it could not grasp and to forgive what it could not forget.

The first English M.A. group takes a time out from studies in Vienna in 1995.
Carpentering a Mortarboard: 65 Years Later

In 1934 Charles Kravet started taking courses at Brooklyn College; ground for the present campus had not even been broken then. But then he was sidetracked: he completed a teacher training certificate and taught industrial arts and carpentry at Alexander Hamilton High School for 20 years. After retiring in 1980, Kravet returned to Brooklyn College, taking numerous non-degree courses. Finally, he enrolled in the CUNY Baccalaureate Program and designed a concentration called “Religious Dilemmas” that combined Judaic Studies, History, Religion, Classics, English, and Anthropology (his mentor was professor of Judaic studies Jonathan Helfand). At his graduation last January, Kravet, a Dean’s List student and a Thomas W. Smith Academic Fellow, received Certificates for Academic Excellence and Special Merit.

Charles Kravet’s daughter Anne, left, confronted this January an unusual problem: what to get your father for graduation.

Russian Humor, continued from page 10

“Fear of disgrace” may account for the appearance of new Russian jokes targeted at Ukrainians as well. Although age-old tension between these groups produced anti-Ukrainian jokes in the past, an explosion of especially fierce humor was caused by the high anxiety evoked by the Ukrainian threat to take its “bread basket” and leave the Union. The pervasive portrayal of Ukrainians as greedy and as insatiable lovers of salt pork suggests this underlying fear. Thus, this tongue-in-cheek ad in a Ukrainian newspaper: “Will exchange a handmade carpet, two by three meters, for salt pork of the same size.”

Deborah Kreuger, a professor at Brooklyn College, notes that the trend began in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and continues to this day. However, she cautions that one should be careful not to attribute ethnic jokes to one’s values.

Sophie Davis, continued from page 2

Chinatown, Castle Hill and Morris Heights are like ugly ducklings now becoming swans. Major hospital-based medical staff of these community health care sites are partners in designing and teaching the Introduction to Primary Care curriculum to complement the biomedical science courses students take at the City College campus of Sophie Davis. For his part, Dr. Baxter is pleased to be working with Sophie Davis, not only because the students are “dedicated and bright,” but also because the “curriculum is one of the few designed by front-line clinicians” after a year-long collaboration with medical educators. Such initiatives are one of the reasons Baxter thinks “community-based health centers are like ugly ducklings now becoming swans. Major hospital-based medical schools are realizing we are the primary focus of urban health care.”

The relationship with the Sophie Davis School is a natural.” Baxter adds, “given its long-standing commitment to primary care and its understanding of our center’s role in the community.”

Letters or suggestions for future articles on topics of general interest to the CUNY community should be addressed to:

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More Fame for BCC’s Landmark Hall

The Hall of Fame for Great Americans on the Bronx Community College campus, pictured here, received the Lucy G. Moses Award of the New York Landmarks Conservancy on April 5 at the New York Public Library.

The Conservancy bestows the Moses Award annually in recognition of excellence in historic preservation. (It was won last year by City College for its renovation of Shepard Hall.) The Hall of Fame, which has National Landmark status, was designed by Stanford White in the neoclassical style and completed in 1901. It consists of a 630-foot open colonnade built in a sweeping arc with wings at both ends. Designed to accommodate 103 sculptured works, the Hall now contains 98 bronze busts and memorial plaques by distinguished American sculptors that honor artists, authors, statesmen, educators, military leaders, and other celebrities. It is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

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