At a Glance

1  New Chancellor Levy Honored by University at Lotus Club Reception

Just a day after his formal appointment as permanent public schools Chancellor, Harold O. Levy was honored by CUNY at a reception at the Lotus Club. Leading the celebration were Board Chairman Herman Badillo and Chancellor Goldstein, who recited a very apt poem on the occasion (see page 3).

2  Trustees Set to Vote on Distinguished Professors at June Board Meeting

Among four new Distinguished Professors to arrive from outside CUNY this fall will be Francis M. Deng, a renowned Sudanese-born diplomat and scholar who has written extensively on famine relief. Since 1992 he has served as U.N. Secretary General's special representative for internally displaced persons. For more on him and others in the June 2000 class of D.P.s, see page 6.

3  The Many Faces and Facets of the University’s Class of 2000

When she arrived from Japan in 1989 with about 50 words of English, Kanuko Okuda’s expertise was in modern dance. The Lehman College graduate is now headed for a Masters at Columbia in social work. For more on her and other outstanding graduates, see page 7.

4  Biography of a Flemish Master of Motion (and Devoted Husband)

Paul Oppenheimer is well known on the City College campus, where he arrived in 1967, as a teacher of English and comparative literature. On page 11 the Editor of CUNY Matters interviewed him about his “other” life as an art historian and his recent biography of Peter Paul Rubens, Rubens: A Portrait: Beauty and the Angelic.

From Free Academy To City University

May 7, 1997 marked the 150th anniversary of the passage and signing of the legislation that made the Free Academy of New York a reality. To celebrate this landmark date, three archivists from Baruch College, Brooklyn College, and City College—Sandra Shoiock Roff, Anthony M. Cucchiara, and Barbara Dunlap, respectively—agreed to pool their efforts and curate a traveling exhibition that would highlight the people, events, students, and times which led to the creation of the present City University of New York.

Interest in the creation of this exhibit was great, and support came from the PSC-CUNY Research Foundation, the H.W. Wilson Foundation, the presidents of all the CUNY campuses, and the Baruch College Fund. Initially opening at Baruch College on May 7, 1997, the array of memorabilia traveled to several other CUNY campuses over the next two years. Beginning with items documenting the early history of the Free Academy, the exhibit then expanded on such central topics as the increasing higher education of women, the growth of the city student life, student publications, the municipal colleges in wartime, athletics, and the growth of the municipal college system in New York. The curators traveled to each of the CUNY campuses in search of artifacts, meeting with archivists, historians, and many administrators and urging the importance of preserving documents revealing their institutional past.

Believing the exhibit should leave a more lasting memory, the three curators eventually began to entertain the idea of publication. This spring the idea became a reality, with the appearance of From the Free Academy to CUNY: Illustrating Public Higher Education in New York City, 1817-1997 (Fordham University Press).

Interim Chancellor Christoph Kimmich provided a challenge grant for the project, and this was met by contributions from former Baruch Interim President Lois Cronholm, former City College President Yolanda Moses, and former Brooklyn College President Vernon Lattin. The PSC-CUNY Research Foundation also contributed, as did the Baruch College Fund. (For more information about the book please contact Margaret Noonan at Fordham University Press, 718-617-4780.)

The book tells of the growth and development of municipal higher education in New York City with extensive text and many fully annotated illustrations, commencing with the tiny Free Academy and its first class of 119 students, and ending with an overview of the largest urban university in the country. Activities both inside and outside the classroom in the last 150 years are defined by the same subject areas as the original exhibit.

Each chapter could have been a book in itself, but the three authors have sought to make their book an engaging, colorful overview of how the municipal system of public education emerged, developed, and took its place in the life of New York City as well as the nation. Featured are just a few of the 120 historic photographs included in From the Free Academy to CUNY, along with captions adapted from the books informative annotations.

The Free Academy has seldom been free from controversy since Townsend Harris first proposed it in 1846, and as it grew into a series of campuses and later a university, new issues surfaced due to changing economic, social and political forces. “We hope,” says Sandra Roff, “this volume will spur additional studies, using the published and unpublished sources available, as well as the rich array of archival resources available at many CUNY campuses.”

The Free Academy’s first president from 1849 to 1869, Vermontor Horace Webster (1794-1871), pictured above, brought with him strong ideas about the centrality of mathematics to higher education, as well as a keen desire to instill discipline—the latter no doubt a consequence of his having graduated at the head of his 1818 class at West Point, where he taught mathematics until 1826. He even established a demerit system at the institution.

T he first CUNY Ph.D. candidates received their degrees in 1965 from Chancellor Alfred H. Bowker (below, left) and Dean Muna Rees (far right). The following year the Graduate School and University Center occupied redesigned quarters at 33 West 42nd Street, a building erected on the site of the old Astorian Hall. Rees provided the leadership and vision that spurred the development of doctoral programs soon after the municipal and community colleges were federated into the University. The City University became official when Governor Nelson Rockefeller signed the establishing bill on April 11, 1961.

Like other CUNY colleges established in the 1930s and 1960s, the Free Academy Building, above, located on the corner of 23rd and Lexington Avenue, was designed by James Renwick Jr., a promising young architect about to be awarded the commission for St. Patrick’s Cathedral. He took Belgian and Dutch town halls as his prototypes, with the windows being derived from King’s College Chapel at Cambridge.

Gaslights, a warm-air heating system, Continued on page 8
LaGuardia Prepares for Mellow Presidency

O n April 24 the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Gail O. Mellow, a prominent educator from San Antonio with three degrees earned at the University of Texas at Austin, as president of the College—on July 1. Evangélos John Gizis, whose master’s and doctorate are both in food science and biochemistry, has been Hunter’s Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs since February 2015.

Mellow served at LaGuardia as a senior administrator responsible for curriculum and pedagogy in 1996-97. Earlier, Mellow served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Rockland Community College, as Acting President and Academic Dean at Quinebaug Valley Community Technical College in Connecticut, and as Director of the Women's Center at the University of Connecticut.

Mellow is currently chair of the American Council on Education’s Commission on Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, and she is also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Association for Higher Education. A frequent speaker on and author of articles on community college issues, Mellow is also the co-author of Healing Technologies: Feminist Perspectives and Double Jeopardy—The Precarious Status of Women of Color.

Trustees Round Up Texan for Kingsborough

A prominent educator from San Antonio with three degrees earned at the University of Texas at Austin, the appointment was by the Board of Trustees on April 24 as president of Kingsborough Community College, beginning on July 1.

Dr. Byron N. McClenney, who succeeds the College’s venerable, long-serving leader, the late Leon M. Goldstein, will bring nearly 30 years of his own presidential experience at community colleges to the Manhattan campus.

Most recently, McClenney was president for 14 years at the Community College of Denver, which has one of Colorado’s most ethnically diverse student bodies. While he developed a nationally recognized system for developmental education, fostered numerous training collaborations with the local business community, and conducted extensive fundraising while helping to create a successful alumni association.

His six Denver campuses served 10,500 students, the Kingsborough campus serves more than 25,000.

Prior to arriving in Denver, McClenney, whose master’s and doctorate are both in education, also served as president of Parkersburg Community College in West Virginia and the Alamo Community College District in Texas.

In addition to sitting on several educational commissions and blue-ribbon committees (notably President Clinton’s Steering Committee for America Reads/ America Counts), McClenney has authored or co-authored many articles on community college management and governance.

Master Plan Approved by Trustees

A t its May meeting, the Board of Trustees approved a comprehensive long-range Master Plan on the organization, development, and coordination of the University, a multi-year blueprint to transform CUNY into the premier national model for urban higher education.

Board Chairman Herman Badillo and Chancellor Matthew Goldstein said the Plan, which was submitted to the New York State Board of Regents for approval, builds upon the University’s renewed focus on high academic standards and expanded educational opportunities.

The plan appeared one year after a mayoral task force led by Vice Chairman Bennis G. Schmidt, Jr. described the University as “an institution adrift.” Badillo stated that CUNY is now “a University on the move.” Among the examples of reform and renewal at CUNY, Badillo cited the appointment of Dr. Goldstein as Chancellor, changes in remedial and admissions policies, a new exit test from remediation, the expansion of “College Now” to the ninth grade in public high schools, and the recent naming of four new college presidents.

Chancellor Goldstein said, “We are committed to providing highly valued opportunity throughout the University system. With the adoption of this Master Plan, CUNY is deliberately choosing a course that rests on raising and sustaining higher standards for all students.”

The Master Plan calls for developing new academic programs, increasing the ranks of the full-time faculty, redefining core curricula, expanding the use of the Internet and rebuilding the University’s physical plant. Highlights of the plan include:

• Establishing a “flagship environment” with highly selective colleges and a University-wide Honors College. This will foster national prominence in targeted undergraduate liberal arts and science programs as well as professional and graduate programs, including such areas as foreign languages, teacher education, photonics, structural biology, new media and computer science.

• Increasing the current slightly more than 50 per cent of courses taught by full-time faculty to 70 per cent.

• Creating a new partnership between the University and New York City public schools that focuses on preparation of high school students for college study and the recruitment and training of talented people for teaching careers.

• Improving teacher education, raising admission standards, improving recruitment, offering scholarships and stipends, and establishing a technology link between CUNY and the New York City Public Schools for “smart classrooms.” This will include video conferencing with master teachers who are implementing exemplary programs in their classes.

• Advancing at least $355 million in capital construction over the next four years to rebuild the University’s capital plant at all senior and community colleges.

• Expanding CUNY On-line, a consortium of 10 CUNY colleges that offers courses over the Internet.

• Creating the Digital Library Initiative, a multi-year, University-wide project that will provide state-of-the-art telecommunications, improve library instructional laboratories, and create a digital core collection to increase the number of reference and research resources.

The Master Plan also calls for initiating a University-wide review of academic core requirements. Approximately 40 speakers testified at a hearing on the Plan sponsored by the Board on May 15. Chancellor Goldstein scheduled two forums on June 15 and 16 to provide additional opportunities for further input and discussion.

The full text of the Master Plan can be easily accessed at the CUNY Web site (www.cuny.edu) by clicking on the Web page ticker at “CUNY Approves Master Plan.”

Near Sweep of Women’s Forum Awards

E ach year the Women’s Forum presents several Educational Awards to encourage mature women in their pursuit of career-enhancing undergraduate degrees. Residency in New York City, a full year of college attendance, and current registration for at least 6 credits are required for eligibility.

On June 15, the Forum, currently celebrating its 25th anniversary, granted a record eight Educational Awards, and seven went to CUNY students. The honored scholars (and their campus and corporate sponsors) are: Waltherius Back (Hunter, Loews Hotels), Azizogi Louchi Eronini (Lehman, Tapelo Capital), Adrienne Ivone (Queens, Merrill Lynch), Joanne McDonough (Lehman, Goldman Sachs), Susan Mirti-Fusco (Kingsborough, Chase Manhattan), Maria Villagros Ortiz (Lehman, Ryland Homes), and Vonita Yvonne Vaughn (NYC Tech, Time Warner).
LANCES OF JUSTICE FOR THE POOR

CUNY Law School Network Aids Public Interest Lawyers

By Dorothy M. Zellner

When Fred Rooney, a member of the 1986 inaugural graduating class of the CUNY School of Law, received a job announcement in the mail from Board of Visitors for the position of Director of the School's newly-created Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN), it struck a chord. The new project, the announcement read, would provide resources, support, and mentoring to new lawyers who wished to establish viable solo- and small-firm practices in underserved communities. And communities poorly served by the legal profession are numerous: according to the American Bar Association Commission on Non-Lawyer Practice, in 1993 as many as 70% to 80% of low-income persons were unable to obtain legal assistance, even when they needed and desired it. The ABA also estimated that conditions were not too much better for moderate-income families. 61% of whom could not find their way to the justice system in 1994.

Since his graduation, Rooney has become familiar with the tribulations experienced by lawyers who choose public-interest practice. First he worked at a Legal Services organization, earning so little that he actually received public assistance benefits for his family. Then he hung out his own shingle for low-income clients in 1987, choosing for his base of operations a Latino neighborhood of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. "When I first opened my office, everyone expected me to know everything. I didn't!" Rooney had to "re-invent the wheel" each time he was called upon to deal with a new need of his soon-burgeoning practice, which was sustained by significant sums of borrowed money that took him years to repay. He yearned for a community of mentors and for a network of peers with whom he could interact.

Rooney's career choice was, if not inevitable, certainly predictable. He had, after all, attended CUNY Law, which since its founding in 1983 has made a commitment to public interest law its prime focus. The School's motto—which now employs four attorneys and which is taken very seriously on the home front—"serving human needs," and, somewhat, of our commitment to 'serving human needs,' and, some-thing. I didn't!" Rooney had to "re-invent the wheel" each time he was called upon to deal with a new need of his soon-burgeoning practice, which was sustained by significant sums of borrowed money that took him years to repay. He yearned for a community of mentors and for a network of peers with whom he could interact.

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The School's newly-created Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) runs a very successful practice with offices in Manhattan and on Long Island. He was pro-filed on the front page of the New York Law Journal last April under the headline, "Indigent Clients Feel Welcome at This Firm." Negron remarked in the article how scrupulous his poor clients were about paying their bills, though they sometimes take a long time and their "payment" sometimes takes the form of barter. "I have never had to hire a collection agency." CLRN helps its members avoid the usual starting-from-scratch hassles of office management, and it has also hired a part-time librarian and an e-mail network to assist them in legal research. Mentors with many years of experience are also available to work through more complicated problems.

The head of CLRN's mentoring program, for example, is Kenneth J. Greenstein, who was a partner at Nixon Peabody and has years of experience specializing in environmental law and public financing. The groups discuss many management issues, such as efficiency, billing, and how to make "fair and reasonable value" on their work. As Rooney says, "You can't ask a person to engage in pro bono service if they can't pay their Con Ed bill."

A few years, he nearly survived but developed a thriving practice, which now employs four attorneys and seven paralegals. The firm's work, which consists mainly of family law, bankruptcy, real estate, workers compensation, and social security cases, was honored in 1994 by the Pennsylvania Bar Association's "Pro Bono Award." As time passed, Rooney himself developed a specialty in international child abduction. This heart-breaking expertise was called on recently. Rooney was summoned by several television news programs to comment on the case of Lilian Gonzalez.

With 13 years of experience in his own small practice, Rooney saw the Community Legal Resource Network directorship as the perfect way to "return the kindness" of those mentors who had assisted him. He saw that CLRN could help other lawyers avoid what he had gone through and help them create financially viable and professional-ly satisfying lives. Rooney got the job. Since October 1998 he has divided his time between New York City and Bethlehem, where he plays a scaled-back role in his firm.

The idea for the network was conceived in 1995. The then newly-appointed Dean, Kristin Booth Glen, invited members of every CUNY Law graduating class to her for a series of dinners, and she heard over and over of their need for mentoring and support to survive in their practices for the underserved. Glen and Susan Bryant, Director of Clinical Education at the Law School, reached out to three other law schools whose mission they believed to be similar: the University of Maryland, Northeastern, and St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.

After two years of brainstorming and discussion among the four schools, a plan was generated. The new CUNY system, hoping to set up a similar service on all campuses. He reports that members of CLRN's general practice groups also hope to set up educational meetings at all CUNY campuses to provide general information about various areas of the law. Rooney hopes that CLRN, which he expects ultimately to have 200 CUNY grad members, will be an "incubator" for experiments in other modes of legal work. (Rooney and CLRN can be reached at rooney@mail.cuny.edu or at 718-340-451.)

At the heart of the program is Rooney's hope that "we've made a positive impact on our members so that they can continue to serve underserved communities." He has seen members of the network become as self-confident as improve as their economic base has improved. He is convinced that "the program saved people from giving up hope,

Shakespeare on Public Interest Law

"Rate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtles breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

King Lear

Play Ball!

At a long-planned reception at the Lotus Club on May 18, the University honored Harold O. Levy. He is seen here with Board of Trustees Chairman Herman Badillo and CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. The mood was particularly celebratory because, by coincidence, Levy had graduated from intern to permanent Schools Chancellor the day before. Knowing of Levy's penchant for verse, Goldstein marked the occasion by reciting a poem by Marge Piercy titled "To be of use." Its opening lines doubly struck the audience of 150, which included many educational leaders, as capturing the Levy style since arriving at 110 Livingston:

The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.

Photo, André Beckles.
THE KILLENS LEGACY THRIVES

Fifth Black Writers Conference
Hosted by Medgar Evers College

By Fred L. Price

President Edison O. Jackson of Medgar Evers College struck the apt Biblical note in his opening address at the Fifth National Black Writers Conference (NBWC), held on March 30-April 2 on the College campus, when he said, “In the beginning was the Word.” Citing the gospel of John to a record-breaking 1,200 participants from across the country and as far away as Germany, Japan, Britain, Canada and the Caribbean, Jackson proudly asserted that the sacredness and power of “the word” were ever-present among African Americans.

“As the drum spreads the word in African civilizations,” he said, “the NBWC fosters spirited dialogue among panelists and a worldwide audience regarding the contributions and current state of writers throughout the Diaspora.”

“The Impact of Literature by Black Writers on Culture and Values in America” was the theme of this year’s event, hosted by Medgar Evers and coordinated by the Department of Literature, Languages and Philosophy. Discussions ranged from the role of the Internet as the “great revolution” in 21st-century publishing, providing unparalleled marketing opportunity for black authors to the impact of rap artists and “performance poets.”

Noting that publication by black writers is at an all-time high, panelists nevertheless warned that we should not be seduced into believing that this greater presence means all is well. Too many deserving writers still struggle to get published, they contended, and there continue to be serious questions about the control and representation of the writer’s work, the responsibility of the writer to the community and, vice versa, the responsibility of the community to the writer. Panelists pointed out that, for African American literature truly to flourish, more blacks must buy, control, review emerging black authors, but all of us should be millionaires.” She asserted that good literature is the creator of sound social values, and she challenged her audience to support its writers and thus insure freedom and voice for blacks in society.

Among the panelists raising similar issues were asha bandele, Bebe Moore Campbell, Maryse Condé, Stanley Crouch, Manthia Diawara, Junot Díaz, Trey Ellis, E. Lynn Harris, Terry McMillan, Walter Mosley, Ishmael Reed, Tim Reid, Sapphire, and John A. Williams.

The NBWC embodies the dream of the Conference’s founder-novelist and former Medgar Evers writer-in-residence John Oliver Killens—to create forums for discussions on issues and trends in black literature. In the 1960s, Killens organized one-day writers’ conferences at Fisk and Howard Universities. When he came to MEC in 1981, he sought to expand this dialogue. Though he died just four years later, his ideals and impact remain.

Killens was a mentor to many African American writers and poets who have received national acclaim, among them Walter Mosley, Sonia Sanchez, and Ishmael Reed, all of whom participated in the opening panel discussion, moderated by Keith Gilardy, a former MEC faculty member. Maya Angelou and Terry McMillan were also students of Killens, as well as the Conference’s director, Dr. Elizabeth Nunez. Nunez, a professor of English at MEC, is the author of three novels, including the critically acclaimed Bruised Hibiscus.

This year’s NBWC also included a round-table with some of the country’s top editors, including Cheryl Woodruff, Senior Vice President for the One-World imprint at Ballantine/Random House, which helped to fund the Conference reception. Standing-room-only readings and performances were also presented at three collaborating institutions—the Public Theater, the Brooklyn Public Library, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. At the Schomburg, cultural critic Kalamu Ya Salaam enthusiastically ventured that performance poetry is “bigger than hip hop.” He told the audience “the page and the stage are not enemies” and “young writers, poets and rappers are still evolving, and are voracious readers.”

Funding for the Conference came from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Nathan Cummings and the Reed Foundations, and it was enhanced by the participation of OBR. “The Black Book Review,” the Open Book Committee of PEN American Center, the Harlem Writers Guild, and the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. Further information on the NBWC can be found on the Web at www.blackwriters.net. But—while it was acknowledged that the voice of the hip hop generation was undeniably creating a new series of black “classics”—panelists cautioned that black writers will thrive only when each generation seeks to be attuned to the literature(s) of neighboring generations. The struggle over the years has been for African American writers to be taken seriously in their own voices—but they reminded the audience, not to the exclusion of listening carefully to the voices of others.

Through black writers seek to influence popular culture, they do not wish to be labeled or to have their work judged derivative. Citing the pivotal impact on the literary scene of the work of the young 18-year-old poet Phillis Wheatley, for example, panelists pointed out that words, not wealth, allowed Wheatley to gain freedom—and an international reputation as a writer.

The audience agreed, many of them passionately expressing their views on the importance of “being heard” and echoing the famous Biblical declaration President Jackson chose for his opening address. In fact, they compared writing to giving testimony in church: writing as a way to reveal one’s most private thoughts and, finally, as a spiritual experience.

John Oliver Killens would have been very pleased.

CHANCELLOR’S MEMORANDUM

On the State and City Budgets

 Chancellor Matthew Goldstein responded to the State and City Executive budgets in a May 11 memorandum posted on the CUNY Web site.

On the State Budget, Governor Pataki and the Legislature have provided critically important funding in order to help us implement University and college priorities. The true beneficiaries of the substantial gains and improvements made are the students of the University. They will be the recipients of qualitative enhancements in their educational experiences at CUNY. They will repay this investment many times over through their contributions to the City, State, and the greater society.

On the City Budget, I am especially heartened by the proposed new support by Mayor Giuliani for strengthened collaborations with the public schools, building on the assistance provided in recent years by the City Council. At the end of the overall process, we will be able to continue reinvesting the ranks of faculty while moving in the direction of a flagship environment. As we work to further strengthen CUNY and its constituent colleges, I want to express my personal appreciation for all the work of our elected officials, trustees, presidents, faculty, students, alumni, and friends of the University who helped obtain these budgets.

To access the full memorandum on the Web site (www.cuny.edu), click on the ticker at “2000-2001 State and City Adopted Budgets.” To access a detailed analysis of the State and City budgets prepared by Interim Chancellor Sherry Brabham, click on “Enclosure” at the end of the memorandum.
RESEARCH MATTERS

Bringing Art, Technology into 3D Focus

Lehman College's Fine Arts Building was designed by the eminent architect Mie- cel Breuer, whose work clearly represented a union between art and technology, and it is thus very appropriate that the Bronx campus's Fine Arts Building is now the principal site for a remarkable new academic research initiative joining art and technology: the Computer Imaging and Graphics program (CIG). In 1996, several of us on the Lehman faculty from the departments of Art and Math and Computer Science began to collaborate in research on an advanced computer graphics and imaging program on campus. The nexus we have in mind—between computer science and studio art—would be unique for both disciplines.

The result was CIG, which rests on the belief, that as art and technology converge, there is a pressing need to rethink the way classes are prepared for the field of computer imaging. CUNY graduates cannot enter the burgeoning fields of new media because they lack the appropriate grounding they need to become professionals in computer science. Indeed, many students who take this "narrow focus" approach find that once they reach a certain level of expertise, they are at a distinct disadvantage.

Lehman's Computer Imaging and Graphics initiative is designed to give students a broad understanding of the humanities, the arts, and relevant aspects of computer science. They take courses in art history, studio art, calculus, computer programming, animation, multi-media and web design. For graduation, seniors take on either a special project, or an internship with an appropriate company.

At present, four full-time faculty are engaged in CIG (a fifth and sixth are anticipated this fall). George Chaikin (Art and Math/CS), David Gillison (Art), Robert Schneider (Math/CS), and Terry Towery (Art). CIG also has several part-time faculty members.

Funding and support for the program has come from the National Science Foundation, the Graduate Research Technology Initiative, Lehman College, and CUNY's Computer Information Services office. From the outset, CIG faculty have pursued an interdisciplinary research path by periodically teaching joint classes. We two, for example, began by sharing courses in 3D imaging and the World Wide Web. Since then, other art faculty have joined in a teaching exchange.

In a move evoked by the enthusiastic response from students taking the Computer Imaging program, a Lehman scientist whose specialty was quantum physics was asked to work with a Lehman studio artist whose focus was art and natural history. The course they taught was on environmental sculpture.

The course they taught was on environmental sculpture. The end product of this multi-dimensional approach is a three-dimensional animation. Even where the end product of this multi-dimensional approach is a three-dimensional animation, the ability to see a scene in three dimensions allows its creator remarkable freedom. Being able to move the 'camera' in a 3D scene means that time can be added to the coordinates of space. This ability to create animations is now so advanced that it is no longer easy to see what is computer-generated and what is mechanically modeled.

This ability is not limited to Hollywood and films like Jurassic Park and The Termi-nator, since 3D imaging is now being used throughout manufacturing, the arts, and society in general. Among the other driving forces propelling innovation in 3D modeling and animation had been Hollywood and NASA. The most recent aircraft built by Boeing, the 777, which has a 3D imaging work stations. Increasingly, starting more than 15 years ago, automobile makers have employed 3D modeling programs in design and manufacture.

Prosecutors are now presenting complex scenarios using 3D animation programs to allow juries to understand their reconstructing of events in criminal trials. One piece of software in particular, Maya, is so good that a group of defense lawyers recently requested that its use be limited or "dumbed down": they did not want juries to mistake animations for actual video footage.

O ne of the core concepts guiding CIG thinking has been that the worlds of science and art must inevitably focus on three-dimensional imaging. Even where the end product of this multi-dimensional approach is a two-dimensional image, having the ability to see a scene in three dimensions allows its creator remarkable freedom. Being able to move the 'camera'...
Distinguishing Features: Nine New Top Scholars

That the City University is nothing if not even-handed will be superbly demonstrated this fall, when Paul Horwich comes from University College in London to join the faculty of the Graduate Center’s Philosophy Program.

But first, recall Oscar Wilde’s observation, in The Importance of Being Earnest, that “life is too short to be wasted on the unimportant.” Among philosophers these days, two views of truth have been debated: the inflationary and the deflationary. Earlier this year philosopher Michael Devitt arrived in the Program as Distinguished Professor, and he counts himself an “inflationist.” As Executive Officer for Philosophy, however, he was delighted to urge the hiring of Horwich, whose 1990 book Truth (now in its second edition) represents the only sustained defense of the opposing deflationary view. This, Devitt explains, “is the view, roughly, that, although ‘true’ is a very useful predicate, it does not refer to a substantive, explanatory property.” (Remember: never simple.) Truth, clearly, is in for a tussle at 365 Fifth Avenue.

H orwich is one of four extramural and five intramural candidates for the position of Distinguished Professors that, as CUNY Matters went to press, were awaiting final Board of Trustees approval at their June 24 meeting. The honors carry with it an annual stipend of $210,500, including the title “Trustee.”

Coming to the Graduate Center’s Program in Spanish and Luso-Brazilian Literatures from Dartmouth, where she served as Department Chair and held an endowed chair in Spanish, will be Lia Schwartz. The Argentinean native is renowned in the field of Renaissance and Baroque Spanish literature, and she is especially well known for her expertise in the genre of satire and for books and essays on the poetry of Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645).

Schwartz was also elected to the presidency of the Association of Hispanists in 1998 (CUNY hosts its annual meeting this coming year). Fluent in five languages, Schwartz studied at the University of Buenos Aires, Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, and received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Her familiarity with New York City is considerable: she maintains a home here and taught at Fordham for nearly two decades, beginning in 1971. CUNY Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer, himself a Hispanist, notes that Schwartz’s grounding in classics has provided her an unusual grasp of the Spanish Golden Age. Her presence will add further lustre to CUNY’s high-ranked program in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian studies.

The Graduate Center’s Political Science Program is celebrating the fall arrival of the renowned international scholar and diplomat Francis M. Deng. Currently a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute, where he has focused on conflict management, human rights, and the role of law in nation-building. Deng has also served, since 1992, as the U.N. Secretary General’s special representative for internally displaced persons.

A native of Sudan, Deng earned his law degree, with honors, at the University of Khartoum, studied at King’s College, Cambridge, and eventually received an LL.M. and a J.S.D. at Yale. He has served as Sudan’s ambassador to Canada, the U.S., and the U.N., as well as Sudan’s minister for foreign affairs. Deng is the author or co-author of 27 books in fields ranging from law, anthropology, political analysis to fiction and poetry. Among his titles are Tradition and Modernization and Masses in Flight. The Global Crisis in Internal Displacement. Deng has also taught courses regularly at Columbia and Yale Law Schools, enjoyed several prestigious grants (Ford, Rockefeller), and has received several professional awards and honorary degrees.

F rom Rice University in Houston, Richard Woolin will bring to the History Program at the Graduate Center a reputation as one of the leading authorities on modern European intellectual history. According to History Program Executive Officer David Nasaw, Woolin’s focus principle is “the political history of ideas. This is not so much the history of political theory, but the political implications of the work of leading 20th-century European philosophers.” What Nasaw calls Woolin’s “duty is to impose an idealized discipline” will be on view in his next book, which appears from the Princeton press this fall, Heidegger’s Children: Philosophy, Anti-Semitism, and German-Jewish Identity. Just completed is his forthcoming The Seductions of Unreason: The Possibility of Counter-Enlightenment in Modern Thought.

Notable among Woolin’s prior books are several other Heidegger studies and Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redeployment. He is a frequent contributor to several periodicals, notably The New Republic, Dissent, and Common Knowledge. A graduate of Reed College in Oregon, Woolin earned his Master’s and Ph.D. at York University in Toronto. He has taught at Rice since 1983, rising from assistant professor to holder of the D.D. McMurtry Chair in History.

A mitas Ghosh, who has been a visiting Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at Queens College this past year, becomes a permanent presence this fall. Known around the world for his fiction, journalism, and human rights activism, Ghosh cuts a wide swath among languages, cultures, literatures, and disciplines. A speaker of Bengali, Hindi, Arabic, and French, in addition to English, Ghosh has taught anthropology, sociology, and creative writing or served as a fellow at universities in Delhi, Charlottesville, Cairo, Calcutta, and New York City. Forthcoming this year is Ghosh’s most recent novel, The Glass Palace, and his international reportage includes In an Antique Land and Dancing in Cambodia at Large in Burma. His novel The Calcutta Synagogue is soon to be filmed by the Oscar-winning director of Mediterraneo. He has been a regular in such journals and periodicals as The New Republic, Kenyon Review, Granta, and The New Yorker. Ghosh was born in Calcutta and eventually earned a D. Phil. in anthropology at Oxford University.

Lehman College’s new D.P. professor of mathematics and computer science is Victor Pan. A specialist in the areas of the analysis of algorithms and several methods of computation (polynomial and matrix, algebraic/numerical, and dense structured matrix), Pan arrived on the Bronx campus in 1988. Among his nearly 170 research papers are several on solving a polynomial equation, a four-millennia-old problem having important practical applications, particularly in computer algebra.

Pan served as Senior Researcher at the Institute of Electronic Control Machines and the Academy of Sciences in Moscow from 1965-76, then immigrated to the U.S., where he became a citizen in 1982. He has co-authored the last 20 years soujourned visiting scientist or professor at such institutions.

Continued on page 12

New CUNY Philosopher Barwich in the Footsteps of India

The Graduate Center’s New Hispanist Schwartz

Ghosh, Writer on Cultures, at Queens College

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Continued on page 12
Stirred (Not Shaken)  
By Ford and Mellon

Not long ago, a question on the mind of Lia Lynch was whether her martinis should shaken or stirred. Bartending was her job while maintaining a 4.0 GPA at Hunter College as an honors English major. Now Lynch is facing a more momentous dilemma: which of two prestigious fellowships for graduate study—from the Ford and Mellon Foundations—to accept for her doctoral studies at Princeton, which begin this fall. A high school dropout from the Bronx who worked at a variety of jobs before earning her GED, Lynch, who is of Puerto Rican heritage, became fascinated at Hunter “by the representations of the colonial mentality in the study—from the press—of two prestigious fellowships for graduate study—from the Ford and Mellon Foundations—to accept for her doctoral studies at Princeton, which begin this fall. A high school dropout from the Bronx who worked at a variety of jobs before earning her GED, Lynch, who is of Puerto Rican heritage, became fascinated at Hunter “by the representations of the colonial mentality in the late Renaissance.” She intends, while at Princeton, to explore how British literature of this period “reinforced the established racial and social hierarchies that continue to affect people of color.” Lynch is seen here being interviewed at her June 2 commencement by New York Times reporter Anemona Hartocollis.

A Dancer Leaps into Caring

After arriving from Tokyo in 1989 with 50 words of English in her vocabulary, Kamuko Okuda danced for four years with several New York companies, eventually becoming coordinator and principal dancer of the Omega Liturgical Dance Company at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. While there she met and cared for many dancers and others with HIV—and her world expanded. Deciding she needed “more knowledge and skills in help-

Island-Hopping Demographer

Originally from the Island of Tonga, an independent monarchical Kingdom in the South Pacific, Leonaltasi Kuluni entered the CUNY BA Program in 1988 and this June received his cum laude with a dual area of concentration in International Affairs and Demography. Kuluni was granted a scholarship to study at the University of Hawaii (taking courses at Manoa and Hilo), then came to Hunter College as an exchange student. He hopes to return to Tonga and become a researcher or professor after graduate study. Among several independent studies Kuluni pursued while at CUNY was a demographic study of the Tongan population in Hawaii. He also researched the worldwide Fijian diaspora and completed an internship at the Fijian mission to the U.N. Of the CUNY BA he says, “My experience, he says, “is that my knowledge, his family’s musical heritage. “I’m particularly drawn to his family’s musical heritage. “I’m

Valedictorian on Bass

Three years ago Pamela Margid came to a fork in the road. Unlike Yogi Berra, she made a choice: to devote more time to her double major in English and History at City College and absent herself from the Pontoos, a successful group for which she was an accomplished bass player (see above). The decision proved brilliant. Margid, whose GPA is 4.0, became the Valedictorian of the Class of 2000 and has received the most prestigious graduate fellowship offered by Cornell, where she will study under Pulitzer historian Michael Kammen. In addition to honors in history, Margid has won several awards and scholarships while at CCNY, including two General Tremain Prizes in Civil War History and the Cromwell Prize, the College’s top history honor. She is shown here delivering her hail-and-farewell at CCNY’s commencement ceremonies.

“Come, a passionate speech”

—Hamlet

Displaying admirable shrewdness and loyalty to their own CUNY students, the last three Chancellors have several times gone to an obvious well of eloquence for their speechwriters: the English Program at the Graduate Center. Over the last decade, five doctoral candidates have served in the position, and, in a splendid coincidence, four of them received their Ph.D.s at the Center’s commencement ceremony on June 1. Marybeth McMahon, now serving in the office of the President of Georgetown University in Washington D.C., wrote her dissertation on Willa Cather; Elizabeth Rosen’s focus is on the interactions between literature and the law (she is an attorney and taught law for several years before beginning her graduate studies). Her dissertation compares the concept of nature in early American law and literature. The dissertation of Peter Taback examined the American middle class’s response to the atom bomb in the writings of Trilling, Cheever, Bellow, Mailer, and Delillo. Chancellor Goldstein’s current writer is James Werner, who earned his degree with a study of the influence of the literary type of the flaneur, a strolling urban observer, on Edgar Allan Poe. The Editor of CUNY Matters sought to arrange a photograph of the four but was firmly rebuffed, the speechwriter’s code of anonymity prevailing. Also present on June 1 was the first speechwriter, Dan Porterfield, who received his CUNY English Ph.D. several years ago and went on to write speeches for Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and, as he does now, direct public relations for Georgetown University.

The Faces of June

TALES OF THE MORTARBOARD

Marybeth McMahon

Marybeth McMahon, now serving in the office of the President of Georgetown University in Washington D.C., wrote her dissertation on Willa Cather; Elizabeth Rosen’s focus is on the interactions between literature and the law (she is an attorney and taught law for several years before beginning her graduate studies). Her dissertation compares the concept of nature in early American law and literature. The dissertation of Peter Taback examined the American middle class’s response to the atom bomb in the writings of Trilling, Cheever, Bellow, Mailer, and Delillo. Chancellor Goldstein’s current writer is James Werner, who earned his degree with a study of the influence of the literary type of the flaneur, a strolling urban observer, on Edgar Allan Poe. The Editor of CUNY Matters sought to arrange a photograph of the four but was firmly rebuffed, the speechwriter’s code of anonymity prevailing. Also present on June 1 was the first speechwriter, Dan Porterfield, who received his CUNY English Ph.D. several years ago and went on to write speeches for Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and, as he does now, direct public relations for Georgetown University.
By Maria Bennett

Magdalena Ramirez pushed a stray lock of wavy, chestnut hair from her forehead nervously and firmed herself, despite the fact that it was thirty degrees or so and the streets outside were awash in a bone-chilling rain. It was Saturday, April 15, however, the day of Hostos Community College’s Second Annual Multicultural Children’s Literature Festival, and she was hell-bent on getting it right. “La-dies and gent-le-men, I would like to pre-sent to you . . .” she rehearsed her introduction slowly and deliberately in a corner of the College’s main lobby, in between stints of welcoming participants with an irresistible grin.

Ramirez was one of 16 student volunteers assisting conference organizer, Professor Rosemary Benedetto Stimola. Highlighting the event, titled “Reading the Millennium: Controversy, Censorship, Choices,” were six workshops and a keynote speech by the famous Southwest ern poet and author Pat Mora.

The 200 participants were treated to exhibits featuring a dazzling array of the latest children’s books from publishers such as Harcourt Brace and Cinco Puntos Press. A senior editor from Lee & Low Books, Louise May, gave up a rare free Saturday morning to share her enthusiasm with the educators, librarians, parents, and students on hand, noting: “We’re delighted to offer books for children that reflect contemporary multicultural issues.”

Since everyone has been made aware of the issue of censorship in children’s literature via the Harry Potter books (certain religious groups objecting to their supernatural content), the conference theme could not have been more timely. Keynote panel presenter Carolivia Herron, looking like a glorious santera in her long white cotton dress, spoke of her own brush with the powers of political correctness after the publication of her Nappy Hair ignited heated debate: “My book started as part of a lecture at Harvard dealing with the epic tradition in African-American literature, and the Nappy Hair story sprang from a story-telling contest with my uncle. People loved the story and told me to publish it, so I did. But, curiously, the only people who protested the book were people who had not taken the time to read it. It’s really not about the hair—it’s about the sheer poetry of our tradition.” Greeted by thundering applause and a huge bouquet of roses and daisies, she mused, “I won-der if I’ll ever be asked to speak in Mississippi?”

Her ideas were echoed by Bobby Byrd, who founded Cinco Puntos Press in El Paso, Texas, and who was also at the center of contro-versy when funding for his company’s book, The Story of Colors, was pulled by the NEA after it was discovered that the book’s au-thor was Subcomandante Marcos, the Chia-pas revolutionary. “It’s really just a story about how the gods created the world, and thought it was boring without colors. It’s a traditional Mayan legend, and it’s im-perative that indigenous peoples maintain these stories. It’s a children’s book, but kids’ books are for the whole society.” The book’s story line is illustrated with the loveliest abstract artistry, which was likened to Picasso by the School Library Journal.

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Keynote speaker at the con-ference, Carolivia Herron, striking a classic pose.

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SECOND ANNUAL BOOKFEST AT HOSTOS
Controversy, Censorship
In Children’s Literature

As around the nation, stu-dents on City Uni-versity campuses rose in protest against America’s military-industrial powers and, later, against the war in Vietnam. On Octo-ber 19, 1967, a New York Times headline read “Brooklyn Students Battle in Peace Protest . . . 40 Arrested on Cam pus.” The melee erupted over the presence of two navy recruiters on the Brook-lyn College campus. Later, in the spring 1970, came the Kent State shooting, and campus demonstrations proliferated. Typical of these mass public protests was one at which Jane Fonda, below, one of the antin war icons of the time, addressed stu-dents on the South Campus of City College. The old Finley Student Center stands in the background.

The Perils of Student Activism

The The Height of Luxury, 1848

and drinking fountains made the building very modern for 1848. Real slate blackboards and cherry-wood desks with stools that had backs impressed the first students as the height of luxury. Total cost for the building and its furnishings came to $80,000 ($2,000 under budget). This photograph was taken around 1900.

When Charles Rogers Bowker (at right) died in 1933 at the age of 85, a long obituary in The College Alumnus stressed his lifelong empathy for the problems and ideals of students. He began what would become a distin-guished career in publishing by launch-
In the Bardo with Eve Sedgwick

Maggie Nelson, a doctoral candidate in English at the Graduate Center, reports on a moving lecture by a renowned SUNY writer on literature, gender, and sexuality—and cancer patient.

In talking about the forms of academia, Sedgwick related the habit of taking down others' arguments with the need to cover up or call attention to the patchiness of our own. Further, she connected this habit with the larger problem of how, in the face of real dread, anxiety, and self-doubt, we cast around frantically for identity.

Sedgwick spoke from a podium in the rear as we in the audience faced the screen. This increased the effect of her voice coming from a strangely suspended place and evoked a sense of meditation rather than scrutiny. The large stuffed bodies dangling in the room both obscured and framed one's vision. When I tried to look at Sedgwick, for example, I would see her torso, but a translucent blue shawl hanging from one of the figures covered her face.

Latecomers bumped into the figures on their way to sit down. The effect was both comic and eerie, as the swinging figures seemed both alive and also lifeless, even lynched. This play between the animate/inanimate relates to the Buddhist bardo: "the disorienting and radically denuding bodily sense generated by medical imagining processes and illness itself," on the one hand, and "the material urging to dress, to ornament, to mend, to re-cover, and heal" on the other. She ranged widely, comparing Buddhist thought with critical theory, pedagogy, and psychoanalysis, pointing out how these are all different ways of knowing that can sometimes collapse into "things known."

Sedgwick explained that the bardo (Tibetan: bardo; en: bardo: split soul) is the space between contracting and uncontracting. In the bardo, a dying human being is temporarily set free from the limitations of the karmic cycle and is faced with a choice about whether or not to complete the current life, the choice of who to reincarnate as, and what to do with the time remaining in the bardo. As she sees it, the bardo is "generous." The lecture connected her interest in fiber art with her deepening interest in Tibetan Buddhism—a "wild and woolly" strand of that religion, she says—and with her own experience of the "bardo of dying." She noted how the experience of an alien, Eastern culture suddenly becoming very personal to her corresponds to her suddenly intimate relationship with her own mortality.

Sedgwick explained that the bardo (Tibetan: bar-in between + do-suspended, thrown) is the space between contracting a terminal illness and death itself. Given the present state of medicine and the nature of certain illnesses like cancer and HIV, this space can be quite an extended one, as there are no "cures," only early diagnoses. Sedgwick writes in a short handbook for her talk that the bardo of dying (like other bardo s, such as rebirth, falling asleep, or dreaming) is "electric with spiritual possibility as well as with pain and loss."

The hanging figures Sedgwick created represent aspects of her experience in the bardo: "the disorienting and radically denuding bodily sense generated by medical imagining processes and illness itself," on the one hand, and "the material urging to dress, to ornament, to mend, to re-cover, and heal" on the other. She ranged widely, comparing Buddhist thought with critical theory, pedagogy, and psychoanalysis, pointing out how these are all different ways of knowing that can sometimes collapse into "things known."

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An Exaltation of Poets

If you were in City College's Aaron Davis Hall on May 16, your chances of being struck by a flying metaphor or simile were about 100%. For students from more than two dozen New York City public schools who gathered there for the College’s 28th annual Spring Poetry Festival, an all-day efflorescence of verse that has come to be known as the city’s “Woodstock of the Spoken Word.”

This gathering of metropolitan poets from seven to septuagenarian was organized by CCNY’s Poetry Outreach Center, and its featured speaker this year was former Queens College Professor of English and award-winning poet Marie Ponsot, the subject of a feature in CUNY•Matters last fall. Speaking of the Center’s director Barry Wallenstein and his colleagues, Ponsot enthused a few days afterward: “They are doing wonderful work, and the range of talent I heard was remarkable.”

Professor of English Wallenstein makes no effort to conceal his pride over the par-Ticipants in this one-of-a-kind event in the city: “The Poetry Festival celebrates the freed voices of the young people in our public schools. At every grade level, in every borough, these kids have natural creativity.”

In morning sessions, poets as young as third-graders from P.S. 30 read their poems, followed by middle school and high school contingent. In the afternoon, after greetings from CCNY president Stanford Roper and community officials and the prize winners, a poem by one of the CCNY Alumni Association’s 1994 Who Deserves the Prize? was featured here at CUNY•Matters as an “Editor’s Pick” in 1999. It is titled “The House of Juliet” and records with wry, bit-sweet humor her observations during a visit to the site of what the Venetian call “la più famosa storia d’amore del mondo.”

On discovering the Victoria’s Secret Closeout

Warm afternoons we ran down Columbus like four sticky ribbons of melting ice cream. Thirteen, and we had just discovered underwear, its colors, its dangerous smell. Holding our newfound flags to the light, we sat under the racks and swore our allegiance, watching fat women walk by with legs tinted turquoise. We were the queens of the city, our matching Maidenforms gowing so bright, we thought ourselves the source.
—Sara A. Newland

Changing Tires, Sampling Broadway: CUNY at the Whitney Biennial

African motifs used in fabrics... and the patterns of body decoration... and in their symbolism: “We spin our wheels smooth... the circular form also implies how we keep going around in circles... still bound, still chained to old ideas, attitudes, behavior.” And in the seemingly never-ending burning of tires once ig-nited Book'er also sees a suggestion of “the smoldering in-ternal fire of Africans” and “the smothering attitudes, behavior” that is all down there. From her mullioned window I watch the crowd cheer, a faith in love natural as breath, never done yet, her cupped palms say, forgetting the end and its taste of ash. Her husband’s shaky hand spirals in slow motion, a last wish he can’t stop making. After every homage, the crowd cheers, a faith in love natural as breath, and I too sigh for love’s outpouring: all the undying strangers’ hands, and the storied walls have been stymied by fate.
OTHER LIVES
Illuminating a Quest for Beauty

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First, some not-so-trivial questions. In what city was the world's first railway constructed? The invention of what substance, apparently first used by the Fleming Jan van Eyck in the early 15th century, revolutionized the power of painters to represent light? Finally, what was the profession of the man who, about 1230, invented the sonnet form?

If you take my word for it that the answers to these questions become pertinent in the course of Rubens, A Portrait, you will have one good reason for agreeing with its author that he has produced a "rather unconventional" biography, drawing as it does from very far-flung materials. Rubens, for instance, doesn't get born until page 6—in 1637, the same year, Oppenheimer tells us, that Shakespeare was studying his small Latin and lessie Greek in Stratford. And the book's conclusion, aptly labeled "Apologia," offers an elegant correspondence between the Rubens style and Albert Einstein's "unwinding of the fact that all mass has energy, as all energy carries mass." Context clearly means much for Oppenheimer, but he is quick to say that his unconventional attack was due in large part to his subject: "Rubens was a spectacularly unconventional man" and was possessed of a "rambunctious, brilliantly out-reaching mind."

Oppenheimer's superlatives suggest Rubens was, as a polymath, virtually in the same league as Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci. "He was the best-read artist who had ever lived—had amassed a huge book collection for that time." He was a learned classicist and read deeply in diplomacy (he often performed diplomatic and espionage services across war-torn 17th-century Europe). He followed the sciences closely, especially optics, and may have counted Galileo among his friends. Oppenheimer, in fact, argues strongly that the soon-to-be-controversial scientist is included in one of Rubens' self-portraits.

"He could also have been a fine writer, to judge from the 250 letters that survive: they make fabulous reading." He was capable of five languages, but wrote mostly in English. But the last fall, he revealed an entirely new identity—that of art historian—when his Rubens, A Portrait; Beauty and the Angelic appeared from Duckworth, in London. The Editor with Oppenheimer in early spring in Central Park, near his apartment, to discuss the project and discovered that this biography was the natural result of one of his firm beliefs: "boundaries between the disciplines are artificial and actually prevent understanding." (If you know of a likely candidate for a future "Other Lives," let the Editor know.)

From his or her "day job" at the University of Chicago, Oppenheimer introduces a staff or faculty member whose extraordinary accomplishment or avocation is strikingly different from his or her "day job" at the University. Paul Oppenheimer perfectly exhausts the species. He arrived at City College as poet-in-residence and comparative medievalist in 1967 and has served there since as professor of comparative literature and English. But he also has been flung down and that years of horrified, he recalls, realizing a gauntlet was studied by Galileo. Even before he was nine years old. "My father took me to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and I ask why. "We're prejudiced against fat women," for starters, and "Rubens is perceived as a subversive propagandist for kings." Rembrandt is the democratic; Rubens the royalist—that is the common misconception." Oppenheimer argues strongly otherwise, even venturing that "the quintessence of Rubenism is democracy." He also considers ill-advise the perception of an "absence of intimacy" in Rubens' extant oeuvre of about 3,000 works.

And Oppenheimer might well think the time is now ripe for Rubens' great theme. The Wall Street Journal recently reported on the debate among art historians about whether Rubens is now being fought on the planet views range between 24 and 30... down from more than 60 in the early 1990s. We should embrace Rubens now, Oppenheimer suggests, because his great theme was "the political energy of peace," and he adds that "the artist has developed so deeply as Rubens into the psychology of war and peace."

This is epitomized in Rubens' spectacular ceiling for the Neo-classical Banqueting Hall in London, near Parliament. It is the most beautiful architectural space I have ever encountered, and so I found exactly right. Oppenheimer's remark that the room "seems the white immaterial brain of heaven." The ceiling's nine panels, he says, are a "great celebration of the possibilities of harmonious union between nations and cultures." This certainly has the ring of pertinence.

I ask how Oppenheimer would make a case for Rubens if given one shot at a lecture hall full of CUNY undergraduates. He eulogizes a perfect gambit: he begins with film-besotted age: "The paintings of his near-contemporary, Rembrandt, always move in the direction of a frozen slice of life—toward the cold photograph. Rubens slices of life always lead on somewhere else—they're movies. Rubens was, to use a term of Picasso's, painting's first cinematographer."

(No, Oppenheimer also contrasts Rembrandt and Rubens by observing that the former was a great professor of darkness, Rubens a professor of light.)

Oppenheimer is reluctant to anoint a favorite painting, even among the dozen or so in the New York area—though he does warmly allude to the Met's "marvelous landscape." A Forest with Dawn and a Deer Hunt, which has the "elegance to meet nature untamed" and explore the "shadowy no-man's-land between civilization and the wild."

And he clearly counts as brilliant and illuminating Rubens' several versions of The Judgment of Paris that span 40 years. In the last one, painted just before Rubens died and now in the Prado in Madrid, Oppenheimer has discovered one of history's most charming feats of miraculousness. For here Rubens must have his beloved second wife, Helena Fourment, his model for all three of the rival goddesses Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena. She is also fre-
Alzheimer’s Association Honors Trustees Chairman Badillo

A black-tie benefit on June 7, CUNY Board of Trustees Chairman Herman Badillo received the New York Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association annual Humanitarian of the Year Award. He is seen here with actress and recording star Lainie Kazan, who emceed the event at the American Museum of Natural History. Badillo was honored with the author Kenneth Lonergan and actress Eileen Heckart, who just closed a much-praised run of The Waverly Gallery, a play about an Alzheimer’s patient. The local chapter of the Association serves nearly 200,000 people with Alzheimer’s, their caregivers, and family members.

Queens Naval Historian Syrett on Board New Jersey

Great Britain and Prussia against France, Austria, Sweden, and Saxony in an effort to topple Frederick the Great (1756-1763), is forthcoming. Syrett, who earned his B.A. and M.A. from Columbia and a Ph.D. from the University of London, has also just completed an 800-page magnum opus on the Royal Navy’s world-wide operations during the Revolutionary War. When asked if a photo of himself on a naval ship might be available, Syrett replied, “No... I never go near them!”

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

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The 25th Evening Readings’ season at Queens College kicks off on October 18 with a celebration of Arthur Miller’s 85th birthday led by Frank McCourt, Grace Paley, and Peter Matthesisen. Filling out the season will be Norman Mailer, Susan Sontag, John Updike, Derek Walcott, Edward Albee, W.G. Sebald, and A.S. Byatt. For season tickets, which sell out fast (one for $40, two for $69), call 718-997-4646.

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Syrett, incidentally, comes from strong CUNY stock. His father Harold C. Syrett was an interim president of Queens College and president of Brooklyn College. A principal investigator for no fewer than five current research projects in the Hunter Neuroscientist Luine

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