G R A D U A T I O N  2 0 0 7

We asked a number of ’07 graduates to share their thoughts on this watershed moment in their lives.

City Tech’s Philip Wong writes of how he turned death and destruction into personal victory. And another graduate tells how he pursued interests in art, ancient languages and accounting, even as, along the way, he found himself homeless and sleeping in a church.

Read them, knowing there are thousands of other CUNY alumni out there with stories that also impress and inspire.

A Graduation and a Marriage
Philip Wong
New York City College of Technology

September 11 was a real turning point for me. I was working on the seventh floor of 4 World Trade Center when the towers were hit. The floor started shaking and the lights started flickering. We saw the first tower burning and witnessed people jumping from the tower.

The experience definitely altered my life. It forced me to focus on where I wanted to go and what I needed to do to get there. My perspective used to be: ‘I can put it off until tomorrow.’ After 9/11, I understood that today might be your last day and you have to make the most of it. I knew I didn’t want to be doing the job I was doing, and I needed to expand my skill set and earn a bachelor’s degree.

I had previously enrolled in college right after high school, but my heart wasn’t into being in school. When I left college during my sophomore year for a job during the Internet boom, my parents, who are originally from the Canton Province in China, were very disappointed. They put such an emphasis on education as many parents do. I was the only one of their four children who hadn’t earned a college degree. Despite not finishing, I managed to rise to the position of senior network engineer and Blackberry administrator as a consultant for a bank.

But I realized I wanted to further my career and look for new opportunities. So I looked for a college close to the financial district that offered a full-time computer technology degree program that included both programming and networking courses. That’s how I chose City Tech in downtown Brooklyn.

Working full-time and going to school full-time had its moments. Working in the technology sector is never 9 to 5. But you learn to manage your responsibilities on both fronts, because that’s what you signed up for. One of the great things about my professors was they were definitely willing to work with me. I arrived at work between 7:30 and 8 a.m. daily, and, after a long day, took the subway from Wall Street to Downtown Brooklyn for classes, sometimes as many as four nights a week.

I credit City Tech with helping me land a full-time position as senior executive support specialist at Charles Schwab & Co. last summer, partly because my courses included programming and networking classes which often required students to work in groups.

Chancellor to CUNY Scientists: Tell Us How You Did It

What first attracted CUNY’s prominent scientists to their challenging professions?

A number were drawn to the sciences early in their lives, after encounters with inspiring teachers whose classroom experiments awakened the excitement of discovery. For instance, there was one internationally renowned theoretical physicist who, while in high school, built an atom smasher in the family garage, and instantly blew out all the circuit breakers in the house. And with the ensuing darkness came the bright light of affirmation that science was for him.

In contrast, there were others among CUNY’s most acclaimed biologists, chemists, physicists, and other scientists who found their calling after numerous detours, dead ends and sleepless nights.

Some, in fact, first pursued an interest in the arts—music or dance—until science gradually or in a Eureka! Moment—finally won their hearts.

These revelations emerged when eight of the University’s scientific luminaries joined Chancellor Matthew Goldstein in a thought-provoking two-part CUNY TV series: “CUNY Honors—A Decade of Science at the City University of New York.”

Speaking with candor, humor, modesty and pride about their widely ranging discussion:

• The need to make science enticing in today’s celebrity-crazed culture, such as getting students excited about research so it becomes a “cool” pursuit and, at the same time, makes them feel they can have careers in science or science-related fields, such as biology ethics.

• The need to have collaboration among scientific disciplines (and a consequent understanding that one doesn’t need to know everything about everything, and that it is necessary to have an array of differing views).

• The possibility that life on this planet could disappear—perhaps sooner rather than later—if problems like global warming aren’t solved.

The special CUNY TV series—which can be downloaded at http://www.cuny.tv-series/cunyhonors/listen.lasse/year=2007—is part of the University’s intense focus on the stars.

Continued inside on page 6
When I reflect on the current state of education in our country, I see an alarming trend: I see fewer students enrolling and succeeding in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). We need to do something about this development, because our common future depends on our ability to reverse it.

I believe that too few students are en- 
ticed at an early enough age by the beauties of physics and mathematical phenomena. Too many are “scarred off” by the accurate perception that these disciplines are diffi- 
cult, that they require serious work and effort. And it is not as if there is not a promising America’s young people in these studies and preparing them for the advanced learn- 
ing and accomplishment in these fields that we as a nation require for our future eco- 

domic health and security.

In recent years, other countries have been far more successful in inculcating a commitment to this type of work than we have. Witness the success of Japan’s “Five Minds for the Future.” As Dr. Gard- 
er makes clear in his book, a disciplined mind learns the ways of thinking that we associate with the major disciplines (he sing- 
lates out mathematics, science, history, and “at least one art form”). And a disciplined mind, Dr. Gardner sug- 
gests, is an active and creative one. “Once 

one has understood well a particular play, a particular way, a particular physical or bio-

logical or managerial concept, the appetite has been whetted for additional and deeper understanding, and for cut-clear perform-

ances in which one’s understanding can be demonstrated to others and to oneself. In 

deed, the genuine understander is unlikely in the future to accept only superficial un-

derstandings. Rather, having eaten from the tree of understanding, he or she is likely to return there repeatedly for ever more satisf-

ying intellectual nourishment.”

This vital intellectual curiosity estab-

lishes a bridge. Dr. Gardner’s “creating 

mind” is one that seeks new work, new 

standards, new questions, new answers. It’s one that views an outlying point or result not as something to dismiss or excuse or ig-

nore, but as something to investigate. It’s a mind like that of Albert Einstein, whose success as a theorist, as Walter Isacson 

has observed in a new biography, “came not from the brute strength of his mental pro-

cessing power but from his imagination and new creativity. He could construct complex 

equations, but more important, he knew that math is the language nature uses to de-

scribe her wonders.”

We need young Americans to “have it all” — they need the disciplinary knowledge 

associated with mathematics and the sci-

ences, and they need the imagination and 

creativity too often missing from root learn-

ing. It’s a lot to ask of those responsible for 

teaching them, but it simply must be done.

When Dr. Gardner writes that “the 

pursuit of learning is to be taken as the 

condition of the mental life of the indi-

vidual,” he is, of course, correct. But 

there is another pursuit as well: the 

pursuit of complex knowledge that can 

be made through your campus personnel office.

Changes of address should 

be made through your campus personnel office.
is Set to Make Life Easier for Students, Faculty, Staff

Top Scientists, Who Say: You Have to Find Your Passion

kicked in when Albert Einstein died, leaving behind his greatest unfinished work. “To me, I was eight years old, I wanted to know why couldn’t the greatest scientist of our era finish that theory? What was that theory? It took me years to finally figure it out by reading books. But that was Einstein’s Theory of Everything. . . . When I was in high school I decided to pursue this.” It led to the circuit-blowing atom smasher he built in the garage and, he joked, to his mother’s repeated lament: “Why couldn’t I have a son who plays baseball?”

“If you look at the history of various fields, the people who have contributed are people who really did very passionately want to do what they did,” said Dr. Myriam Sarachik, Distinguished Professor of Physics at City College.

To be scientists, students have to be problem-solvers, agreed Dr. Jill Bargonetti, Professor of Biology at Hunter College. “I think that’s really the exciting piece of science, getting the data and solving the problems. . . . When you get to a point where you can’t wait to walk into the lab and see your piece of data. . . . Not all students need to become academics, and they should know about other related careers they can pursue, said Dr. Ruth Stark, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry at the College of Staten Island and The Graduate Center, and Director of the CUNY Institute for Macromolecular Assemblies.

“Some first pursued an interest in the arts—music or dance—until science finally won their hearts.”

“Nanotechnology, that’s the thing now; there are a lot of opportunities . . . because you can make fuel cells using nanomaterials, you can increase the efficiency; you can figure out ways to sequester greenhouse gases or even reuse them making energy or even storing the energy,” said Dr. Akins, whose principal research is in this discipline.

CUNY scientists are working on projects that will lead to—and have led to—a number of breakthroughs. Dr. Marie Filbin, Distinguished Professor of Biology at Hunter College has discovered a way to block the spinal cord from regenerating after an injury.

New technologies will also start to provide some sense of how our universe interacts with space and time, perhaps even other spaces and other times, other universal structures, said Dr. Charles Liu, Assistant Professor of Astrophysics at the College of Staten Island, who studies galaxy evolution.

So when, and how, do the experts think the world will end? For theories on this, and more, tune in to the chancellor’s conversations with university scientists on CUNY-TV.
**John Jay Studies Psychology of Wrongful Convictions**

Kassin and more than 100 other presenters spoke at the first conference ever on the nexus between psychology and criminal police work. Kassin’s talk, “Untrue Confessions: From Colonial Salem through Central Park and Into the New Millennium,” was one of the most widely discussed among the more than 300 attendees at the conference, which took place at the Graduate Center from March 1 through 3.

Kassin sees preventing false confessions as a must in today’s world. “It’s imperative to do what we need to do to stop false confessions from happening,” he said, “because there just may not be an adequate safety net in the jury room.”

Kassin’s were among dozens of provocative questions to emerge at the conference. “Off the Witness Stand: Using Psychology in the Practice of Justice” Do eyewitnesses give false testimony? Can liars really be exposed? Can a witness’s memory be trusted?

Code-named the Munsterberg Conference in honor of the 100th anniversary of the seminal book by Hugo Munsterberg, father of so-called forensic psychology, the event marked a seminal attempt to realign Munsterberg’s work with the growing body of research on science and the law in the 21st century. Forensic psychology is the application of basic psychology to law and legal decision-making, Kassin said.

Exactly one hundred years ago, Munsterberg, William James’s hand-picked successor to be the director of Harvard’s Psychology Laboratory, rattled the gates of the criminal justice system, and announced that the social sciences wanted a respectable place in the dialogue about crime and its perpetrators. Munsterberg offered to “pay” for his admission to the discussion with a series of essays later collected in the first book on psychology and the law, On The Witness Stand.

“Munsterberg was in court at the time of his trial, and he was convicted by a juror who apparently didn’t like his affectless demeanor, Kassin said. Today, 18 years after Tankleff entered the Clinton Correctional Facility near Canada, his case is on appeal to the Appellate Division of New York State Supreme Court in Brooklyn, and 31 prosecutors from around the state have joined a brief to demand that his conviction be overturned. There is another killer, they maintain: Jerry Steuerman, a man who has changed his appearance, and turned up in Los Angeles two weeks later. Steuerman was never considered a suspect, Kassin said. The prosecutors on the brief argue there is an overwhelming amount of evidence to overturn the conviction.

Doyle, for his part, said the conference, the first of its type in the nation, set a new standard. “What you have in this conference is not some astonishing silver bullet such as the discovery of radioactivity but a long series of productive interactions between law and science on the cutting edge of things like interrogations, eyewitness identification mistakes, predicting dangerousness of sex offenders, understanding juveniles,” he said. “What you’ve got is a conference that marks and reshapes the dialogue between law and science and sets this thing off for a new century. And that’s powerful.”
Legislators Honor William H. Greene—CCNY’s 1st Black Grad—for his ‘Courage’ and ‘Character’

The State Senate unanimously passed a resolution honoring William Hallett Greene, who graduated from City College in 1884 thereby becoming the first black person to earn a degree from a CUNY institution.

After CCNY’s then president, Alexander Webb, a former army general, interceded on Greene’s behalf, Greene also became the first black person to enlist in the Signal Corps of the United States Army.

In its spring issue, CUNY Matters, citing records retrieved from the National Archives and other documents, showed how Greene had encountered racism during his three-year stint in the military.

In 1887 he was pressured into leaving the Signal Corps following charges that he had gambled. CCNY Matters presented evidence showing Greene had been targeted by white high-ups from the moment he entered the all-white Army unit.

The article also showed that Greene, during his years at City College, had shown himself to be a young man of exceptional intelligence, ability, patriotism and character.

The unanimous State Senate resolution—introduced by Senate Minority Leader Malcolm Smith—followed publication of the article.

“It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those rare and extraordinary individuals from the State of New York whose remarkable courage and strength of character impacted the history of our State and Nation...” the Senators said.

Greene’s life and encounters with racism have been an abiding interest for years of Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson, who some years ago asked CUNY Matters to begin doing an investigation into Greene’s experiences in the army. The Senior Vice Chancellor first learned of Greene in the summer of 2004, when he saw Green’s photograph buried in a closet at CUNY’s Central Office. The photo was dusted off and placed in the Board of Trustees lounge, where it sits today alongside photos of Jonas Salk, A. Philip Randolph and other alumni luminaries.

In their resolution, the Senators ordered that “a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Jay Hershenson, Secretary of the Board of Trustees and Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations at the City University of New York. To read the CUNY Matters article (written by editor Ron Howell) on William H. Greene’s life, and to learn more about his time in the Signal Corps, visit the exhibit.”

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From 2004 through 2006, a perfect match of 18 Cuban and 18 American designers created dramatic posters around the themes of “Shared Dreams,” “Dreams of Peace,” and “Love Conquers All.”

Now, all 36 original posters will be on display in an exhibit called Sharing Dreams: Cuban and American Graphic Designers Across the Digital Divide at the Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Queens College, from June 25 through August 9.

The works demonstrate the importance of grassroots interaction in building bonds of friendship. The exhibit, which has also traveled to Canada, now makes its New York debut.

In a related event, the public is invited to a free evening of music and dancing on Wednesday, July 11, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Guests will be able to hear traditional Cuban music by YeraSon, a New York-based Cuban orchestra. Visitors will also have the opportunity to meet Cuban artist Yoana Yelin, who was born in Cuba but is now living in the United States.

The event will also include a demonstration by Queens College graphic design student Joanna Bednarz, who will engage the museum’s visitors in a hands-on activity to create their own original posters.
**Continued from front page**

But other big things happened. As our mid-June graduation date approached, I was also getting ready for my wedding ceremony. Of course, being my class’ valedictorian was the icing on the wedding cake!

**Track Star to Biology Ph.D.**

Danielle Eki Okoro

Hunter College

I was at Hunter College that I discovered the two loves of my life: biological research and track.

My route to Hunter was long and roundabout. It began in Miami, where I was born, and then proceeded to my grandmother’s home in Lagos, Nigeria, where I grew up, and finally to New York, where I enrolled in Hunter in 2002.

My education in Nigeria—I attended a boarding school from about age 8 to 14—taught me to be self-sufficient. Because the emphasis was on rote learning, I was not well prepared for the challenges of the American school system. Hunter taught me how to think independently and apply theoretical knowledge. Hunter also taught me that my talents and interests were in science.

By 2003 I was a full-time Hunter student. But my path to self-discovery really took off in the fall of 2004 when I enrolled as a MARC (Minority Access to Research Careers) scholar in a class with Dr. Jill Bargenetti, Hunter’s award-winning molecular biologist. My first year in her laboratory was challenging because I hadn’t taken the courses to prepare me for that level of science. Dr. Bargenetti’s support and my fellow students’ encouragement provided an environment in which I became comfortable, and I found myself asking as many questions as I wanted, even simple ones, without fear of being looked down on. Among the way, I attended scientific conferences in Georgia, Texas and California, and I met role models like Dr. Ben Carson, who spoke in several conferences in Georgia, Texas and California, and improved my times in my sprint events. As I completed my studies from so many different corners of the world turned the CUNY experience into a rewarding one. I remember my first English class had me writing about the film Il Postino which tells the story of Pablo Neruda’s postman while the Chilean writer was in exile in Italy. The writing of that short paper took me back to my roots; it was a positive omen of what would become my new full-time dedication, the analytical study of Latin American literature. The courses took me at BMCC initiated me into a working relationship with some gifted professors who motivated me to challenge myself further. Happily, a Fiterman scholarship subsidized my studies.

And the CUNY B.A. offered me a tantalizing opportunity to combine the offerings of several institutions—Brooklyn College, Hunter College, the School of Professional Studies and the Graduate Center—as I constructed my program’s two concentrations: Latin American Studies and Jewish Diaspora Studies. Fortunately, to ease my transfer from BMCC, I received a Brooklyn College Presidential Transfer Scholarship. The CUNY B.A.’s Thomas W. Smith Academic Fellowship made possible the completion of my studies.

In January 2007, I applied and was accepted to the CUNY Graduate Center’s Hispanic and Latino-Brazilian Literatures and Cultures Program. In September, I will start the Ph.D. Program and begin teaching Spanish at Brooklyn College.

**One College, One Family**

Raymond Reyes

Hostos Community College

I forget to say that he has graduated from Hostos Community College three times in three different decades. His last graduation dream came true as I received my associate’s degree from Hostos. My father, Juan José Reyes, earned his degree in 1987. He was the first in his family to graduate from college. Then in 1992, his wife, my mother Evelyn Rosado Reyes, earned hers. This year I proudly received my own degree and my dad feels that we have won the trifecta.

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My father, Juan José Reyes, earned his degree in 1987. He was the first in his family to graduate from college. Then in 1992, his wife, my mother Evelyn Rosado Reyes, earned hers. This year I proudly received my own degree and my dad feels that we have won the trifecta.

My father likes to reminisce about how, decades ago—in the years before his graduation—he took part in the struggle to keep Hostos open. He proudly recalls how he and his companions took over “Building B” in order to make sure Hostos remain open.

**Saved by a Day Care Program**

Dasha Harold

Lehman College

I had always dreamt of graduating college, having a family, and one day becoming a writer. After high school, I enrolled in Southern Illinois University, where I majored in broadcast journalism and minored in speech. I made the Dean’s List, and everything was going according to plan. Then I was proposed to and in the spring of my sophomore year, I married.

After the birth of our son, an opportunity arose for our family to relocate to New York City. Reluctant at first, I agreed to move. I researched universities to attend and places to work. Out of all the colleges I researched, Lehman College was the best choice for me.

Lehman offered on-campus daycare, courses needed for my degree, and a campus that accommodates students with families. The only challenge at this point was the commute. My son and I had to travel from uptown (Washington Heights) to Lehman College in the Bronx. That meant waking up very early each morning to get my son and me ready for school, catch a train, ride a bus, and walk him to school. That ritual would continue in the rain, sleet, and snow for two years. Sometimes I wanted to quit, but then I remembered my mother’s words: “Anything worth having will be a challenge.” I interned in the Media Relations Department as a podcast producer, wrote articles for the Merid-
Moments on the Path to a Degree

Strengthened by a Mother’s Love

Sara Butler
Macaulay Honors College/College of Staten Island

I was born in Seoul, but when I was a few months old I was adopted by an American couple who would become my loving parents. My new father, Robert, was a detective with the NYPD and my mother, Margaret, was a stay-at-home mom. They were third generation New Yorkers, of Italian descent on my mother’s side and Irish on my father’s.

People often ask me if I have any curiosity about my birth parents or my Korean heritage. I tell them I do not because I was raised as any other American child and that is what I have always considered myself to be.

My mother sacrificed to provide a good life for her children. After my father passed away in 1990, she took a job as a school crossing guard and eventually remarried. My mother taught me to be strong-willed, outgoing, and independent. Just as significant, she instilled in me her love for the Rangers and the Yankees. Some of my fondest memories have been when we are together watching our favorite teams.

All during my time at Macaulay Honors College at College of Staten Island, I had a goal of going on to attain a Ph.D. I never thought, however, that I would venture so far away from home to accomplish this goal. When I told my mother that I was going to study abroad in China, she was nervous because I was going overseas, but she was happy that I had the opportunity. I have had other wonderful experiences.

The financial benefits of the Honors College and the Watson Fellowship allowed me to concentrate on my studies full time. And I gained the confidence to take chances.

One such chance was my decision to graduate early. I applied to graduate programs a year ahead of schedule, and was accepted by my first choice school, University of California, Los Angeles, on a full fellowship. There, I will earn my Ph.D. in political science and pursue my interest in American politics and quantitative methodology.

Since high school, I have wanted a life in academia. I am now about to leave home and pursue my dream. I do not know where I will end up in the long run but I know that, wherever I go, people will know that I am my mother’s daughter.

I am my mother’s daughter.
In a quiet cafeteria lounge at the NY Designs Business Center in Long Island City, Redeemer Amedzekor lights up as he explains the vision for his young design company.

“We like to do things on the cutting edge,” said Amedzekor, 29, who started his marketing and communications firm one and a half years ago, shortly after graduating from City College of New York. His firm, iConcept Media, provides services such as concept development, graphic design and media buying, specializes in serving small businesses and professionals. His eclectic roster of about 15 clients includes companies like Black Star Tours, a small and based travel agency and Willey Knox, a Tokyo-based apparel company that’s looking to establish a foothold in the U.S. market.

“We take pride in developing a tiny idea into a big concept," Amedzekor said. "We enjoy working with start-ups." Like his entrepreneurs clients, Amedzekor’s own story is one of constant evolution.

At age 16, he arrived in the Bronx from Ghana with his parents and six siblings. His father, Patrick, and mother, Victoria, are both ministers—and his mentors. From them he gained a sense of higher purpose. “I’m spiritual in the way I’m being guided to make a difference,” he said. But his mother—also an entrepreneur whose businesses have included a bakery, contract firms and a beverage distributorship—taught him another important principle: “Anything I wanted I could achieve, if I focused on the end results.”

At City College Amedzekor majored in music theory, with an emphasis on jazz and classical music. He also threw himself into campus life.

Amedzekor was editor-in-chief of the school newspaper and president of the student government. In between classes and extra-curricular responsibilities, he worked as a hotel manager for Holiday Inn and began dabbling in the production of special events around campus. He founded a nonprofit organization called All About Edu-tainment, whose mission, he said, was "to enrich lives through the arts, entertainment and education." Along with other groups, All About Edu-tainment organized talent showcases and other events, sometimes raising money for student scholarships, other times promoting AIDS/HIV education or youth voters' registration.

For Amedzekor, AAE offered not only promising potential but also a frustrated computer user, with the thought, "Hey I can use that somewhere else,” he recalled. Plus, he added, being at CUNY enabled him to "create some really good networks in school. It's definitely a competitive advantage.”

Still, amid the welter of events, course work in music and business, demanding student group activities and his hotel industry jobs, it took a while to figure out what direction to take. "I knew I wanted to be successful, but I wasn't sure what I wanted to do,” he recalled. But as he sorted through his life, looking to shed activities to "countries of the African diaspora," including the Caribbean region, said Doe Kodjo, the company's marketing director. Kodjo met Amedzekor at a business networking event at City College several years ago and the two soon began working together.

"It's one of the things that most impressed us [about iConcept] was their slogan,” Kodjo said. "Your impossibilities are our possibilities.”

Earlier this year, iConcept moved into the NY Designs Business Center, an economic development program of LaGuardia Community College. The firm is among about eight design companies located in a retooled industrial building that once housed the Sunshine Bakery. The goal of the center, which opened last year, is to create a community of designers of all types—product design, fashion, architecture, lighting, jewelry—who entrepreneurs can learn "the business part of their business" from networking with each other and consulting with on-site experts, according to Natalia Arguello, the center’s creative director.

The newly painted center offers conference rooms, gallery space, high ceilings, huge windows with panoramic views of the city—even a "brainstorming wall" in the lounge where the center's residents can gather to collectively kick around strategies and concepts.

A Fresh Approach

It is the freshness of iConcept's approach that impressed Gregory Sanders, vice president of TechHeadz NY, a Manhattan-based technology consulting company that helps small businesses and professionals like doctors and lawyers with needs such as Web design and network support. “They have brainstorming sessions. Everyone in the company gets involved…They come up with some amazing ideas.”

In one session, Sanders recalled, "iConcept brainstormed with a group from TechHeadz to come up with ways to re-think their logo. ‘They asked us, ‘What do computer people look like?’ Sanders remembered. “Do they come to save the day, like Superman? Are they nerds?” The company is now considering a short list of "re-branding" concepts, including the image of a frustrated computer user, with the tagline, “Don't try to be a nerd yourself. Call TechHeadz.”

In the end, Amedzekor says, it’s all about growth, personal and professional. He recently hired three people in marketing and sales positions, as his company looks to focus its new business on higher education institutions and high-end fashion companies. “I become better and better from my everyday experiences with different clients," he said, in his typically sanguine way.
When 14-year-old Belva Bennett McNall Lockwood was invited to teach in a small town north of Buffalo in the 1840s, she perhaps for the first time in the main world she was born into: a female teacher was paid less than half the salary of a male. This, she wrote years later, was “odious, an indignity not to be tamely borne.”

Lockwood spent virtually all her subsequent long life—she died in 1897 in New York City and early 20th-century America, most notably denial of the right to vote and the outrageous legal “disabilities” women suffered in the law and in the legal profession.

How fitting that the first full-length biography of this dauntless pioneer of women’s legal rights—the first woman admitted to practice in the Supreme Court and the first to mount a campaign for President—should be authored by Jill Norgren, emerita professor of government and legal studies at John Jay, CUNY’s college of government and legal studies. For her early years of teaching, Belva decided to go back to school, but her father refused, convincing her instead to marry a local farmer. In 1853, when she found herself a poor widow and single mother raising a young daughter—a not uncommon situation among CUNY students—she bravely headed back to school, in her case tiny Genesee Wesleyan Seminary (later part of Syracuse University). Here she demonstrated the “ladylike” concern for her students that characterized all of her public life. Norgren has written: “It was her example that became her own most obvious political accomplishment.”

After graduation, Belva taught for several years around New York State, but in 1866 she was drawn to the excitement of politics and power in the nation’s capital. Though nearing 40, newly remarried to one Ezekiel Lockwood and now with a new baby daughter in tow, Belva decided (like many an older CUNY student) that a career change to something completely different was in order. Her choice—lawyering—was courageous, for the number of women lawyers then could practically be counted on one hand. Indeed, this tale follows the arc of one raise one’s own bootstraps, it is Norgren’s at John Jay, CUNY’s college of government and legal studies. Would Be President

The First Woman to Aim for the White House
By Gary Schmidgall

Wood’s five-year lobbying siege against the legal “disabilities” that kept women out of the “spittoon and boots” world of lawyering—and arguing before the Supreme Court.

The entrenched attitude against women lawyers is captured perfectly in a concurring opinion from an 1873 Supreme Court case, Bradwell v. Illinois, that kept women lawyers at bay: “Man is, or should be, woman’s protector and defender. The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfitness for the occupations of civil life.” But triumph finally came.

York stockbroker and radical loose cannon, had mounted a brief run in the 1872 presidential race, but it collapsed long before Election Day.

Those eyes fell on Lockwood, who, not in favor of woman suffrage but convinced Lockwood was a point of multiple planks, not just a suffragist one (starting her long right with Anthony), and she campaigned from coast to coast. Norgren reports that the press treated the “mockery of a candidate” and treated her “with an even-handed professionalism.” Those were the days.

Lockwood revealed in the “breeze” her run was making, and her sarcastic mutter—“I cannot vote, but I can be voted for”—resounded. After all, the Constitution stipulates only that a president must be native-born, at least 35 years old, and a resident within the U.S. for 14 years (Norgren incorrectly says “lifelong” residency). The founders clearly did not add “male” because the notion of a woman President was so far beyond imagining.

In Call Me By Your Name: A Novel (published earlier this year by Farrar, Straus and Giroux) Aciman, Egyptian-born and Jewish, writes about 17-year-old Elio, the son of an expatriate professor. The object of Elio’s submerged affection is Oliver, 24, a scholar and author of a book on Heraclitus. Elio and Oliver play tennis together and flirt with young ladies, but they also see each other by the pool.

Aciman is also the author of the acclaimed memoir Out of Egypt and of the essay collection False Papers.

From Priest to Professor
John Hall, Distinquished Professor of Criminal Justice at John Jay College and the Graduate Center, has just published a memoir of his youthful embrace of Roman Catholicism and his time as a priest. In Belief: A Memoir, published earlier this year by Sage, Bauman has written.

A Classic of Criminology

Jock Young, a Distinquished Professor of Criminal Justice at John Jay College and the Graduate Center, is receiving praise for his book, The Vertigo of Late Modernity, published earlier this year by Sage.

Zygmunt Bauman, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at University of Leeds, has said that Vertigo of Late Modernity is destined to become a classic work of criminology. Young launches a frontal attack on the ‘common sense’ of social studies,” Bauman has written.

Young is also the author of the 1999 book, The Splitter’s Social Exclosure, Crime and Difference in Late Modernity.
The ‘Mass Appeal’ of Astronomy Turns Some Professors

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With all the enthusiasm of the Energizer Bunny, Irving Robbins, clad in midnight blue track suit and running shoes, bounds up the shiny spiral staircase to the College of Staten Island’s observatory.

The associate professor of physics and astronomy, who is hot on the trail of unknown errant asteroids, pushes his wide-brimmed canvas Aussie cap back off his brow, flips a switch and, like magic, a section of the serrated silver dome slides open, revealing a sliver of the sky, and a 16-inch Meade telescope, serious as an attacking tank, swings into position.

Before you can exclam, “Cosmic!” Robbins is a blur again, connecting computers, special digital cameras and a global positioning system to his third eye, which he says is like a “big bucket that collects light so you can see dim objects.” But to see what the telescope sees, he runs down the stairs to another computer, which gives him an up close and personal view of the sky. “We are an international station for hunting and tracking asteroids,” he said. “I’m looking to target ones that may hit the earth. I’m also on the hunt for new asteroids.”

The Staten Island Observatory, which observes its 10th anniversary this year, is much more than a bunker for Robbins and a central meeting place for CUNY students and faculty to conduct research. It is a very powerful symbol of the University’s continuing quest to reach for the stars in all the sciences.

“Astronomy has mass appeal,” said Tim Paglione, an assistant professor of astronomy at York College, where CUNY’s second observatory is expected to open in fall 2008. “It’s a hook to bring people into the stem sciences, where minorities are underrepresented. We pull in the people and even if they don’t pursue astronomy, they may stick with science or engineering.”

Charles Liu, an assistant professor of astronomy at the College of Staten Island, said that since the beginning of time, the mystery of the universe has held man spellbound.

“Human beings have always looked up at the sky and wondered, ‘What’s out there?’ Where are we? How did we get here, and what’s going to happen to us eventually?”

Those are the big questions that astronomy and astrophysics—today these terms are interchangeable—answer. Astronomy is literally an extension of humanity’s quest for all knowledge. I’m studying things that won’t change the price of bread today but that could change the course of civilization tomorrow.”

CUNY’s embrace of astronomy makes it outshine other institutions, said Shana Tribiano, an associate professor of astronomy at Borough of Manhattan Community College. “The fact that CUNY has a space science baccalaureate degree program that includes a variety of astronomy classes is a relatively rare and wonderful thing. There aren’t many astronomy classes for undergraduates anywhere.”

At CUNY campuses, where astronomy classes are so popular that many even have a waiting list, New York City College of Technology is offering a new one-year astronomy sequence in fall 2007, and a growing constellation of scientists is exploring everything from starburst galaxies to black holes and meteorites.

And five faculty members—Liu, Paglione and Borough of Manhattan Community College’s Tribiano, Barry McKernan and K E. Savick Ford—are among more than 100 scientists around the world collaborating with the American Museum of Natural History on a study of data collected from NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope.

For COSMOS, as the Cosmological Evolution Survey is nicknamed, they are training their talents and their telescopes on the largest contiguous patch of sky the Hubble ever imaged. It is only the size of a thumb tip but it is hoped that it will bring the world the most detailed thumbnail of the universe in history. “We are gathering data of unprecedented depth and detail,” Liu said. “We’re looking at X-ray, radio, ground-based data, spectroscopic data—it’s kitchen-sink astronomy. It’s a way to throw everything at it so we can get a detailed look that can inform us about the universe as a whole, its evolution, its aging process and its origins.”

Paglione and Tribiano are studying starburst galaxies, Liu is delving into the star formation history of the universe, McKernan is focusing on supermassive black holes and Ford is lending her expertise in microwave and infrared astrophysics.

“COSMOS has great potential, and it’s a great collaborative enterprise,” McKernan said. “It’s a very important survey of the sky that we hope is representational.”

COSMOS’s participation in the project has been key and is greatly appreciated by the Planetarium, said Hayden Planetarium Director Neil deGrasse Tyson. “The science department at the museum has enjoyed a long and fertile history of collaboration though research associates—scientists at other institutions whose research interests overlap those of museum scientists,” Tyson said. “In the spirit of this legacy, we are collaborating with CUNY scientists, and their contributions are crucial to the full analysis of this rich source of data on the large-scale structure of the universe.”

Paglione said that COSMOS has given him great insight into his own research field of starburst spiral galaxies like our own, where the new stars “live fast, burn furiously and die in tremendous explosions” and has inspired him to expand his interests to faraway elliptical galaxies, what he calls the “red, dead galaxies.”

Tribiano said that regardless of what COSMOS reveals about the universe, it is making a very down-to-earth contribution to the University. “By working on COSMOS, I become an active scientist and that enriches the class,” she said. “I’m better informed, and I can give them current research information when they ask questions. And I’m an example to them because I can show them that if you are interested in something, you can pursue it.”

McKernan agreed, adding that astronomy is a gateway science because people are really interested in the search for life and other worlds.

A lot of students are fascinated with black holes, and they’re interested enough to overcome their terror of math.”

CUNY’s collaboration with the American Museum of Natural History, which has a century-long tradition of research, has a history and is much broader than COSMOS. When Robbins established the space science baccalaureate program in 2001, CUNY students took some of their classes at the Hayden Planetarium. “The museum for astronomy and space science always has been a touchstone for CUNY programs,” said Liu, who was a scientist at the museum’s Hayden Planetarium before joining CUNY in the fall of 2003. “It’s a centralized location and a high-profile institution.”

In an ongoing program funded by the National Science Foundation, CUNY undergraduates have the opportunity to get summer internships in astronomy and physical science at the museum. “This is a national program that allows CUNY students to work with their peers from around the country,” Liu said. “Because our campuses don’t offer the opportunities or have the facilities to allow students to do big, long, sustained research projects, with this program, we’re bringing in CUNY students in a research environment that they ordinarily wouldn’t get.”

For eight positions this year, we got 160 applications from around the country.”

Closer to earth, Paglione is focusing on the new observatory, which will be placed in the middle of the campus at Liberty Avenue and 160th Street. Lake Staten Island’s observatory, York’s will be open to the public once a month. “Right now, I bring a telescope up to the astronomy terrace,” Paglione said. “When there are major events, we get a good turnout. At the last lunar eclipse, we had 300 people.”

The beauty of astronomy for amateurs and professionals, said Tribiano, is that “everyone on the planet has a night sky, and it’s free.”

Liu would like to expand the COSMOS collaboration at CUNY and plans to invite others to join in the research. “My
into CUNY Stars

BMCC Says ‘Math Across the Curriculum’ Project is a Big Success

For many students—particularly those in fields like English or fine arts—the mere mention of cosine, exponents or irrational numbers is enough to make palms sweat and stomachs churn. But the math department at Borough of Manhattan Community College has implemented a program to make such “math phobia” a thing of the past.

Under the guidance of Senior Vice President Sadie Bragg, Dean Michael Gillespie and Dr. Klement Teixeira, BMCC has launched a Math Across the Curriculum (MAC) initiative, in which problem sets that teach quantitative reasoning skills will be incorporated into courses as varied as sculpture design, business and nursing.

Through funding from the University’s Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE) initiative, the program guides professors from a wide variety of disciplines to teach mathematical concepts in ways that are more palatable to students who have an aversion to traditional mathematics instruction.

The program has been used successfully at other colleges across the country; however, BMCC is one of only a handful of community colleges in the country to use the program.

“Most students are quite capable of quantitative reasoning, but the way they process information varies from student to student,” said Dean Gillespie. “By introducing abstract concepts within a context they already understand and have an interest in, they are able to absorb them and see how they apply to real-life situations.”

During the first MAC initiative three years ago, Professor Teixeira and his assistant Leon Scott worked with BMCC faculty across the disciplines to create problem sets specific to their courses. One goal was to help students prepare for test 2 of the CUNY Proficiency Exam, which requires students to read and interpret graphs and charts critically.

Senior Vice President Bragg and Dean Gillespie were also encouraged by the success professors Teixeira and Frederick Reese experienced with their Quantitative Reasoning course, which they developed to teach students how to apply math in their daily lives. Students learned how to solve a variety of problems such as:

- When it does happen—and he doesn’t have to consult the stars to know it will—Robbins will be more than ready. "Naming rights come with the discovery," he said gleefully. "I’m planning on calling the first one Staten Island for the college. The second one will be called CUNY."
FOR MANY, summer is a time to rest and relax, to celebrate past victories and dream of those to come. But, truth be told, for many of us summer is also a time for job hunting. Recognizing that fact, the Borough of Manhattan Community College is offering a series of workshops dedicated to boosting employment-seeking skills.

The workshops are being sponsored by BMCC’s Center for Continuing Education & Workforce Development, and the modest entrance charge is $10 for students and $20 for others.

Another series of workshops, held on evenings in July and August, will help you answer that question. Those workshops “will incorporate several on-line tools which analyze elements of your preferred work location and times, and suggest several career options you may never have actually thought of—yet,” the Center says. Other sessions deal with, among other things, writing resumes and perfecting interview skills. But summer is not only about serious business like resume writing.

Kingsborough Community College, for example, will host its “Hot Summer Nights!” free concerts, with pop, salsa, soul, indie, folk and other types of music played live.

On Saturday, July 28, you’ll be able to turn back the clock and “dance under the stars to favorite melodies from the golden age of swing,” with the Danny Repole Swing Band, the college says. And on July 22 you’ll be able to move to the son of beats of Jose Conde y Ola Fresca. Check out the CUNY online calendar by visiting www.cuny.edu and clicking the “events” link.

Have a great summer.