Opening the Gates:
Lin-Manuel Miranda in Conversation with Bill and Melinda at Hunter College
In Memoriam

Many wonderful things are happening at Hunter now—from students winning prestigious awards like our first-ever Rhodes Scholarship, to faculty receiving major grants and national honors, to a campus that’s being dramatically modernized and expanded. It’s why we’re all so excited about celebrating Hunter’s 16th anniversary in 2018. It will be a year of promoting Hunter as a transformative New York institution, celebrating its legacy of advancing women and minorities. Highlighting it as a hub of the arts, and showcasing it as a center of thought leadership. We’re making plans now for a year-long series of events, so hope as many of our wonderful alumni as possible will be able to participate.

It’s always a joy for me to greet returning alumni, especially when they were students I knew as undergraduates. There have been several inspiring encounters this year, most recently when I accepted an award from the Harlem Educational Activities Fund, a marvelous organization that helps put minority boys and girls on the college track. We’re proud that many of them choose to go to Hunter, including the wonderful alumni who introduced me at the ceremony, Evelyn Perez-Albino ’88.

Evelyn was born in the Dominican Republic, grew up in Washington Heights (my old neighborhood), got into Bronx Science High School thanks to HEAF’s support, and was an outstanding student in our pre-law program. She’s now a practicing attorney, a community activist—and a new mom. Her introduction was full of warm memories about her Hunter days, including the thrill of being taken to see the musical “In the Heights” and meeting Lin-Manuel Miranda backstage. I couldn’t have been prouder.

It was a pleasure for me to hear from our first Rhodes Scholar, Thamara Jean ’18, who has settled into her studies at Oxford where, in keeping with a grand old university tradition, she has received her “penguin suit.”

This year’s Hall of Fame induction ceremony brought more outstanding graduates back to the campus, including the great Hispanic community leader Jose Calderon ’19 and Dr. Patricia Bath ’64, the first African-American woman to win a patent.

I’m always thrilled to welcome the wonderful Hunter graduates who attend the annual Reunion Day, including several centenarians (there really is something in the Hunter Water). And I was delighted to present an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Arthur Elgort ’94, who combined his Hunter education and New York style smarts to revolutionize fashion photography.

If you are celebrating an anniversary year, we look forward to seeing you at our Reunion Lunch on April 6, 2019. This year will be extra special as our celebration will include alumni celebrating their 25th and 35th reunions as well as welcoming all of our Bronx Campus alumni. It’s sure to be a great day “home” at Hunter.

We’ll keep you up-to-date on plans for the 150th anniversary celebration. And please stay in touch with everything happening at Hunter by visiting our website (www.hunter.cuny.edu). You can also follow us on our Twitter feeds (including @Hunter, College and @HunterPresident). On Instagram (@HunterColleges and @HunterPresident) and at Hunter’s Facebook page. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at president@hunter.cuny.edu.

THE PRESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

Lin-Manuel Miranda Leads a Wide-Ranging Q&A—and Hunter Students Ask Some Big Questions

When you get a good education, when you go to a Hunter College or a Hunter College High School, it changes the trajectory of your life. We want to make sure that all students in this country have that chance.” — Melinda Gates

Hunter College was chosen by the Gates Foundation as the site to launch its 10th Annual Letter, it was an exceptional honor—and a natural fit. The Gates Foundation spends about $500 million each year on initiatives to bolster educational equity and postsecondary success. As a top-ranked public college, Hunter has advanced that same mission for nearly 150 years, opening doors of opportunity for generations of students.

Bill and Melinda Gates could not have asked for a more thoughtful, engaged and perceptive group of students than those who gathered for the lively forum moderated by Hunter’s own Lin-Manuel Miranda, HCES ’92, HCHS ’98. After congratulating the assembled students for going to an “awesome school,” Miranda added that he “won the lottery at age six” when he was accepted to Hunter College Elementary School.

“When the education I got there shaped who I am,” he said. As the conversation got underway, Miranda read questions submitted by attendees as well as the live Facebook audience. He even fielded one from Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who asked: “If you could go back and give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?” Asking for a friend.”

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We’ll keep you up-to-date on plans for the 150th anniversary celebration. And please stay in touch with everything happening at Hunter by visiting our website (www.hunter.cuny.edu). You can also follow us on our Twitter feeds (including @Hunter, College and @HunterPresident). On Instagram (@HunterColleges and @HunterPresident) and at Hunter’s Facebook page. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at president@hunter.cuny.edu.

Before introducing Bill and Melinda Gates, Lin-Manuel Miranda congratulated students for attending an “awesome school,” saying he “won the lottery at age six” when he was accepted to Hunter College Elementary School.

At the 2018 Hunter College High School commencement, Lin-Manuel Miranda celebrated his Distinguished Graduate Award by inviting his former cappella group on stage to perform another wanted to know how to promote effective birth control in Africa, and a Hunter Elementary School student asked, “What do you think you could do to help bring theater to communities all over the world?” That question prompted Miranda to jump in and emphasize the critical importance of arts funding. “The arts are just as vital a part of our economy as anything else,” he said.

When Bill Gates was asked what advice he had for future entrepreneurs, he urged students to stay in school and noted that students who pursue studies in the sciences will find that their skills can make a real difference. “If your talents take you toward science, programming, advances in biology, or energy breakthroughs, these areas are going to be the biggest source of change,” Gates said. “The only solution I see out there is innovation,” he added. “If you have an idea that science gr...
Hunter’s First-Ever Rhodes Scholar...

Bill Rhodes lead to Oxford. "I have always been a Rhodes Scholar,” Bill Rhodes said. "It is one of the most prestigious academic awards available to American college graduates—the Rhodes Scholarship—and left for England to begin her studies this fall. The first Hunter student to receive this award and just one of 31 Americans selected for this honor, Jean is pursuing an MPH in political theory at the University of Oxford.

Jean believes that she will bring a unique perspective to Oxford, and credits her outstanding education and the diverse community at Hunter for that. "Going to Hunter College definitely made me see that people absorb knowledge and commitment to public service. In that program, she organized students on college campuses nationwide to participate in a film screening and online discussion to raise awareness about the need for an Equal Rights Amendment. She was also one of just 10 students selected for the prestigious Mellon-Mays Fellowship, which allowed her to spend a summer conducting research with a Harvard University professor. Based on the glowing recommendation letter she earned by their own backgrounds and experiences, that are formed by their own backgrounds and cultures,” she says. After she earns her master’s degree at Oxford, Jean intends to pursue a PhD and then to immerse herself in writing. “I would like to be able to produce knowledge that helps inform what is happening politically and socially in the African-American community,” she says.

Thamara Jean ‘18

... and Its Second Luce

Matthew LoCastro ‘17, a graduate of Hunter’s Macaulay Honors College, has won the prestigious Luce Fellowship. Hunter is one of only two public universities in New York State and the only public college in New York City where students are eligible to be considered for this distinction. LoCastro is the second Hunter student to win this prize. The scholarship, which is awarded to 15-20 young American scholars annually, finances a year of study and professional work in an Asian country with the goal of fostering a greater understanding of Asia among potential leaders in American society. Candidates for a Luce Scholarship must be high-achieving college graduates with notable leadership potential but limited experience in Asia or Asian studies.

Michael Mazzes ‘18

Six New Fulbright Winners

Hunter students’ impressive record for winning Fulbright awards continued this year, maintaining the College’s status as a Top Producer of U.S Student Fulbrighters. Three members of the Class of 2018 and three other recent gradu- ates accepted Fulbrights this year, enabling them to teach, conduct research and study abroad.

Victoria DiTomasso ’18, a Macaulay Honors College Scholar, is spending a year in Germany studying “the smallest and dimmest stars in our galaxy, figuring out what they’re made of,” she says. Upon returning to the United States, DiTomasso will enroll in Harvard’s PhD program in astronomy.

Elleni Katechis ’15, MSED ‘18, is spending her Fulbright year in Taiwan teaching English and living with a host family. Katechis plans to return to New York to teach and may pursue a master’s in TESOL (Teaching English to speakers of other languages).

Maurice Ray ’17, a Hunter Macaulay Honors Scholar who double-majored in English and psychology, is spending a year teaching English in Argentina. Upon returning, she plans to enter a master’s program in social work or a doctoral program in clinical psychology.

LoCastro hopes to attend law school when he returns from Asia, and he definitely plans to stay involved with his alma mater. “I hope to give back as much as I can,” he says. “I hope to help other students achieve their goals,” he says. “I think I have learned a lot from Hunter.”
ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer science at Hunter College is getting a major upgrade. The program is adding new faculty and retouching its curriculum, while also increasing course access to non-majors, so more students can develop vital tech skills or even consider recharting their path to study in this in-demand field. The number of students majoring in the field has skyrocketed as well, increasing tenfold between 2010 and 2018. It has been investing so heavily in computer science, the College has received a $5 million, two-year grant to accelerate that progress. Mayor de Blasio’s administration demanded in today’s workforce. The world runs on technology—not just in the tech fields but in every major industry,” says Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab. “We’re committed to doubling the number of Hunter students who graduate into great tech jobs, and we’re so grateful to computer science department chair William Sakas for his innovative thinking and deep commitment to achieving that goal.”

Among other changes, Dr. Sakas has rebooted to allow students to learn her course has grown from 500 to 1,000 in the near future.” All told, six faculty members to 1,000 in the near future.” All told, six faculty members have joined the department over the last three years, and the number of majors has grown to more than 800, putting the College well on track to meet the CUNY 2X goal of doubling the number of Hunter graduates who get jobs in the tech industry.

FROM INTERNS TO INSIDERS

Lauren Fried, who serves as the gateway to a computer science sequence, studying everything from programming to data mining, cryptography and artificial intelligence. They also participate in social, academic and career-building activities, such as this tour and tech talk at Google headquarters.

Aisha Khoja ‘20 interned at SumAll, a cross-platform marketing analytics company. “Before my internship, I had nothing on my resume,” says Khoja. “I know this will open doors for me.”

Daniel Fried—who serves as Motivate’s campus manager of CUNY 2X—was an intern at Motivate, a start-up recently acquired by blue chip companies like Bloomberg, Inc., where Hunter College graduates Simon Ayzman ‘15 and Aarsh Vora ‘16 now work as software engineers. As career professionals who have returned to Hunter as adjunct lecturers, they offer students valuable insights into what’s like to be employed in the tech field.

“I started tutoring when I was an undergraduate and really enjoy teaching,” Vora says. “I get a lot of satisfaction out of helping students gain a deeper understanding of computer science.” Adds Ayzman: “I like showing them how what they’re studying can translate into a rewarding career.”

Educators and business leaders have come to recognize that computer science is a new “basic” skill, one that should be introduced early alongside reading, math and other core academic subjects. That requires well-trained computer science teachers, and Hunter College is at the forefront of preparing those educators. In fact, Hunter was a major force in persuading the New York State Board of Regents to create a new K-12 Computer Science Teacher Certification. That effort was led by Michael Zamansky, coordinator of Computer Science Teacher Education at Hunter College. Zamansky came to the College two years ago to develop a curriculum for K-12 computer science instruction. He recognized the need for computer science to be a specialized licensure area and, with some of his Hunter colleagues, began advocating for that change in Albany. It’s now official: teachers must be certified at the state level to teach computer science in New York schools. How will certification change the way computer science is taught? “It’s a game changer,” says Zamansky. “Just as you want your child’s biology teacher to have studied the life sciences, you want your child’s computer science teacher to have computer science expertise.”

Cohort members take an enriched version of Hunter’s first-year computer science internship program, studying everything from programming to data mining, cryptography and artificial intelligence. They also participate in social, academic and career-building activities, such as this tour and tech talk at Google headquarters.

NEXT-GEN PREP FOR COMPUTER SCIENCE TEACHERS

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Hunter continues to get rave reviews. This year the Princeton Review hailed the College as “the crown jewel of the CUNY system,” and once again named Hunter as one of the “Best Colleges” in the country in its Best 384 Colleges guide. We’re also on its honor roll of “Colleges That Create Futures” and “Colleges That Pay You Back.”

Hunters national academic standing also remains on the rise. After jumping from 42nd to 28th last year in US News and World Report’s annual rankings, Hunter moved up again this fall, now ranking 21st among the magazine’s Best Regional Universities, North, and 6th among public colleges on that list. Additionally, the Wall Street Journal places Hunter in the top third of 1,000 colleges nationally.

...Where the American Dream Comes True

For 148 years, Hunter has opened doors of opportunity for aspiring students. One of them is Alicia Baksh-Ousman, who left Trinidad at age 16 to attend college in New York. After she became pregnant at 17, however, she remained at the deli until at last, in her 20s, she took time to help low-income families with their taxes. In her absence, he made inquiries and was touched and a bottle of peach Snapple, noticed her order each morning was a breakfast sandwich. She was there to help low-income families with their taxes. He stepped forward on the stage of Radio City Music Hall to be surprised by her loyal, caring customer, John Doyle. He was there to congratulate her and give her a gift of—what else?—peach Snapple.

Alicia Baksh-Ousman celebrates her graduation at the May Commencement with John Doyle, one of her regular customers when she worked at a Midtown deli. He spotted her potential, helped her land a job with his company and came to the ceremony to applaud her. It all came together at the May 2018 Commencement when Baksh-Ousman, who had by then landed a job at a top accounting firm, stepped forward on the stage of Radio City Music Hall to be surprised by her loyal, caring customer, John Doyle. He was there to congratulate her and give her a gift of—what else?—peach Snapple.

Dresselhaus receiving the Presidential Medal of Excellence from President Obama

The year 1999 was one of tremendous opportunities for aspiring students. One of them is Alicia Baksh-Ousman, who left Trinidad at age 16 to attend college in New York. After she became pregnant at 17, however, she remained at the deli until at last, in her 20s, she took time to help low-income families with their taxes. He stepped forward on the stage of Radio City Music Hall to be surprised by her loyal, caring customer, John Doyle. He was there to congratulate her and give her a gift of—what else?—peach Snapple.

FUTURE FACULTY
Great Alums Make Inspiring Teachers

...amazing what can happen when one brilliant Hunter College graduate returns to campus to teach. When Mildred Dresselhaus H87, PH’97 arrived at Hunter, few careers were open to women and she expected to become an elementary school teacher. Then she took a nuclear physics class with Professor Rosalyn Yalow ’41, professors who devote themselves to teaching and mentoring new generations while continuing their own important research. Honoring that legacy, at Commencement last spring, Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab began planting the idea of return in the minds of several high-achieving members of the Class of 2018.

Dresselhaus receiving the Presidential Medal of Excellence from President Obama

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ALEXIA ARTHURS

How to Love A Jamaican

A rising literary star, Alexia Arthurs ’11 is the author of How to Love a Jamaican, a collection of stories drawn from Arthurs’ Jamaican heritage that showcases her insight and versatile gifts as an observer and chronicler of lived experience. Born in Jamaica, Arthurs moved to Brooklyn at age 12 and soaked up all the vibrancy of city life, as well as the complexity of her newly forming immigrant identity. Like many Hunter students, she was the first in her family to graduate from an American college, and she babysat to earn her way through school. After graduating from Hunter, Arthurs was accepted into the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, where she serves as a visiting assistant professor of fiction. To How to Love a Jamaican, Arthurs weaves together a diverse portrait of Jamaicans in their home country and the diaspora—with the 11 stories tracing the path of her own history, from the Caribbean to New York City, to Midwestern university towns. While this funny book is Arthurs’ first story collection, her work has previously appeared in the Virginia Quarterly Review, the Swannance Review, Vice, and The Paris Review, which awarded her its 2017 Plimpton Prize for Fiction. She is known for bringing a raw honesty and poetic maturity to her explorations of adolescence, family tensions, violence, loss, and joy, earning widespread acclaim for her work. The Oprah Magazine hailed the book’s “singular mix of psychological precision and sun-kissed lyricism,” noting that her “bustling debut marks the emergence of a knockout new voice.” The Atlantic devoted an entire column to praising the rich nuances of Arthurs’ next, celebrating How to Love a Jamaican as “a joy to read.” Put simply, Arthurs is a writer people are talking about because she has something to say.

ISABELLA ROSSELLINI

My Chickens and I

Well known as an actor, model and filmmaker, Isabella Rossellini is also the author of multiple books. While longtime fans might find the topic of her latest volume—a passion for raising chickens—unexpected, it’s no surprise to her fellow scholars at Hunter College, where Rossellini no longer teaches her breeding heirloom chickens at her organic farm in Bellport, Long Island, allowing her to conduct hands-on animal husbandry research while working toward her degree. Now, she is sharing that experience, and what it taught her, in a whimsical book suitable for readers of all ages. In My Chickens and I, Rossellini offers amusing reflections on her relationship with her chickens and their relationships with one another, alongside instructive descriptions of the various breeds. It’s all delivered in spare, delightful prose, with vivid photos taken by Patrice Casanova, who perfectly captures the proud bearing and beauty of her subjects. Vanity Fair was charmed by the unconventional book, remarking that Rossellini took “what started as a hobby . . . and turned it into art.” At Hunter, Rossellini has turned that hobby into a focus for her studies as well.

YUKIKO KOGA

Inheritance of Loss

When Yukiko Koga was growing up in Japan, her father questioned whether she should even finish high school. So today, when she stands in front of a classroom as an assistant professor of anthropology at Hunter with a PhD from Columbia University, she delights in the example she sets for students. Koga’s first book, Inheritance of Loss: China, Japan, and the Political Economy of Redemption after Empire (Chicago, 2016) is a testament to her intellectual achievements. It has been hailed in academic circles, and in 2007 was honored with two major prizes from the American Anthropological Association: the Francis L.K. Hsu Book Prize, awarded annually to the English-language book making the most significant contribution to the field of anthropology, and the Anthony Leeds Prize, awarded annually to the most outstanding book in urban, national and/or transnational anthropology. In Inheritance of Loss, Professor Koga examines the legacy of state violence in northeast China and Imperial Russia, and the contemporary society continues to reckon with its echoes. Throughout the text, she helps readers come to terms with losses inflicted decades ago by imperial and war, exploring how individuals and nations can heal after catastrophe. A member of the Hunter faculty since 2000, Professor Koga was recognized with the 2018 Presidential Award for Excellence, receiving the prize for Scholarly Achievement. She is a specialist in legal anthropology with her research focused on the generational transmission of losses inflicted by Japanese imperialism in East Asia. Koga is now hard at work on her second book, tentatively titled Post-Imperial Acknowledging Law: Redress and Reconciliation.

BENJAMIN HETT

The Death of Democracy

Professor Benjamin Hett, a leading scholar of 20th-century Germany, is the kind of history professor who makes the past feel present—not an inevitable series of events, but a living story. Famous for his absorbing, information-packed lectures, Professor Hett teaches a Hunter course on Hitler’s rise to power that is known as a must-take for history majors and non-majors alike. A member of the Hunter faculty since 2003, Professor Hett received his PhD from Harvard in 2001, and taught in its History and Literature Program for the following two years. He has received many awards for his scholarship and research, including the Ernst Fraenkel Prize in Contemporary History for his 2008 book Crossing Hitler, and a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship. In 2014, President Raab and the Hunter College community honored him with the Hunter College Presidential Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity. Hett’s most recent book, The Death of Democracy: Hitler’s Rise to Power and the Downfall of the Weimar Republic, gives readers a glimpse of why his Hunter course is so popular. In that book, he examines the perfect storm of circumstances that propelled Hitler’s rise, arguing that the dictator’s ascent came from a nationalist response to economic globalization, coupled with the consent of other powerful politicians who mistakenly thought they could control him. The Death of Democracy, published in June 2018, has earned accolades from E.J. Dionne, Fareed Zakaria and Jonathan Chait, among others. Reviewers have praised the book as well, with The New York Times describing it as an “extremely fine study of the end of constitutional rule in Germany,” and praising the “careful prose and fine scholarship” that make 1930s Germany feel uncomfortably close.
Actress Jane Fonda, here with New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, spoke at Roosevelt House about the need to raise the minimum wage for tipped workers.

Laurence Leeds, Jr., HCES ’41, chairman of Buckingham Capital Management, celebrated with Hunter College Elementary School’s most recent graduates at their commencement ceremony, where Leeds received the 2018 Distinguished Graduate Award.

Former New York State First Lady Matilda Cuomo, also mother to current governor Andrew Cuomo, and Mayor David Dinkins enjoyed the Hunter garden party at Roosevelt House.

Author Gay Talese, shown here with Phyllis Kossoff ’46, was honored at an event celebrating the eighth anniversary of Hunter College’s Writing Center.

Richard Dreyfuss, actor and founder of The Dreyfuss Civics Initiative, discussed his passion for the democratic process and civics education with Hunter students.

Author and business leader Tina Santi Flaherty and award-winning fashion designer Zang Toi celebrated at the annual Hunter College garden party at historic Roosevelt House.

Gallerist Fredericka Hunter (left) and artist and Hunter professor Carrie Moyer celebrated the exhibition opening of “Stephen Miller: Orchidaceous” at 205 Hudson, the gallery in Hunter’s Master of Fine Arts building.

Philanthropist Laurie Tisch and Hunter College Art Advisory Board member Lawrence Benenson attended The Feminist Institute’s screening of an Eva Hesse documentary at the Hemmerdinger Screening Room.

Happenings at Hunter

At the inaugural Jack Newfield Lecture at Roosevelt House, New York Times reporters and 2018 Pulitzer Prize winners Mike Schmidt (far left) and Maggie Haberman (second from left) were joined by Newfield’s family.

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At the 2010 ribbon-cutting ceremony, then-U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon observed: “Surely, 42 East 65th Street is one of the most important houses of the modern era.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama met with students and scholars at Roosevelt House before receiving the President’s Medal. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (left) is joined by Roosevelt House’s Jonathan F. Fanton Director Harold Holzer during a 2018 visit.

Hunter students joined the late U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan at Roosevelt House for an inscription of global human rights and international justice issues.

“This PLACE OF SACRED MEMORIES”

T he U.S. was at war, and President Roosevelt was aboard a battleship streaming toward an Allied summons in Tehran, when his New York City home became part of Hunter College 75 years ago.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt stood for FDR at the November 22, 1943, ceremony on Hunter’s main campus. Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia—nearly a foot shorter than Roosevelt—represented the city. Mrs. Roosevelt read a greeting from her husband, added her own sentiments, and handed the deed to College President George Shuster.

At that historic moment, the Roosevelt House became an official, vital part of the all-girls school Eleanor loved—and for whose students she had been cooking grilled cheese sandwiches for years! Reopened as a multifaith student center—the first of its kind in the nation—the House hosted religious, social, cultural and academic groups—including Hunter College and the College’s first African-American club. Immigrant students learned English here, while all students learned tolerance. From the beginning, the House personified American diversity, democracy and opportunity, true to FDR’s charge that it be devoted “to the high purpose of mutual understanding.” For decades, the House remained a cherished location for College activities and special events, including talks by Eleanor herself, who returned often to inspire students. By 1992, however, Roosevelt House had fallen into disrepair and the College temporarily closed its doors.

When President Jennifer J. Raab took the helm in 2001, she secured $25 million in public and private funding to rehabilitate Roosevelt House. At the November 2010 reopening, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon cut the ribbon.

Now known as the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute, the fully restored landmark hosts Hunter undergraduate programs in human rights and public policy honoring the legacies of both Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, and presents faculty and public programs exploring both policy and history.

THE PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE: A Magnet for World Leaders

Through education, research, public discourse, and exhibitions, Roosevelt House fosters learning and dialogue on the major public policy challenges of the day. It hosts a wide range of engaging public programs, seminars and conferences featuring distinguished speakers from around the nation and the world.

ROOSEVELT HOUSE

FROM FAMILY HOME TO NATIONAL TREASURE: A Roosevelt House Timeline

1902-1908: As Franklin pursues careers in law and public service, Eleanor cares for their growing family.

1908-1912: Roosevelt House sold by Hunter College to become an official residence of FDR’s mother in 1941, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt purchases the home for $25,000, with the intention of her son’s future residence there.

1913-1920: Franklin and Eleanor temporarily relocate to Washington, where FDR serves as assistant secretary of the Navy and Eleanor volunteers for the Red Cross during World War I. Sara remains at #47.

1921: Troubled with polio at Campobello, FDR returns to the House in 1921 and makes inspiring recovery, using home’s elevators for mobility. Begging strength and optimism, he reestablishes himself as a viable candidate, despite incurable paralysis of his legs.

1924-1927: FDR practices “walking with a cane” in 2nd-floor library to prepare for triumphant comeback at 1924 Democratic Convention. Eleanor hosts prominent women leaders to encourage registration and voting. She runs for New York in 1926, and again as campaign chair for Gov. Roosevelt runs for and wins landslide re-election in 1928.

1928-1930: FDR runs for and wins landslide victory in second-floor parlor—in effect, his first “primary night.”

1930-1938: The Roosevelt family comes to prominence; here FDR and Eleanor reside, using Roosevelt House as headquarters; here FDR and Eleanor host President and Mrs. Roosevelt in front of Roosevelt House, before leaving for a week-long visit to Hyde Park in 1933.

1932-33: House serves as presidential transition headquarters, here FDR and “his brain trust” discuss foundations of the New Deal, including Social Security, minimum wage, and child labor laws.

1933: House is home base for FDR’s triumphant presidential campaign to measure an anxious nation suffering through Depression, he gives first speech as president-elect before leaving in second-floor parlor—in effect, his first “fireside chat.”

1933-1944: Roosevelt House featured in movie “Sunrise at Campobello.” Eleanor temporarily relocates to the President’s Medal.

1944-1945: Eleanor Roosevelt speaks at 30 events at Roosevelt House featured in movie “Sunrise at Campobello,” and receives the U.S. President’s Medal.


1949: Hunter College president George Shuster. At the 1949 ribbon-cutting ceremony, then-U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon observed: “Surely, 42 East 65th Street is one of the most important houses of the modern era.”

1950-1961: Roosevelt House serves as home base for FDR’s successful first campaign for governor of New York in 1928, and again as campaign chair as Gov. Roosevelt runs for and wins landslide re-election in 1930.

1961-1962: Roosevelt House reopens as multifaceted home to Hunter College and its students. Over next 50 years, it hosts countless guest speakers, faculty meetings and social events. FDR dies in 1945.

1962: In need of extensive repairs, Roosevelt House shuts its doors to the public.


1987-1992: The House is home base for the College’s Public Policy Institute, the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute, the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute.

1992: Hunter College temporarily closed its doors. For decades, the House remained a cherished location for College activities and special events, including talks by Eleanor herself, who returned often to inspire students. By 1992, however, Roosevelt House had fallen into disrepair and the College temporarily closed its doors.

2006-2010: Under leadership of President Raab, House is fully renovated, reopening November 15, 2010, as public policy institute honoring Roosevelt legacy.

2010-18: Hunter of guest speakers over the years includes Dalai Lama, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Jane Fonda, Governor Andrew Cuomo, government leaders, UN officials, intellectuals, and a Who’s Who of educators, philosophers, public policy experts, and human rights advocates.

2010: President and Mrs. Roosevelt in front of Roosevelt House before leaving for a week-long visit to Hyde Park in 1933.

Celebrating 75 Years as a Hunter Institution

THE CAMPUS OF SACRED MEMORIES

This was the Presidential message that Eleanor Roosevelt read at the 1943 dedication ceremony of Roosevelt House: “This place of sacred memories is to become the first college center established for the high purpose of mutual understanding.”

Eleanor’s own remarks stressed family legacy: “No houses could have a better background for the use they will grow and prosper until there is a similar establishment in every institution of higher learning in the land.”

In 1944, Hunter College president George N. Shuster welcomed First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who spoke on “Education and Democracy” in her first major address at the College. Seated behind them, wearing one of her trademark hats, is student-body president Bella Abzug ’42 (née Savitzky).

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A HOME AWAY FROM HOME
New Dorms on the Upper East Side

F orget hot plates and mini-fridges! Full kitchens outfitted with all the appliances necessary to whip up meals are what the students in Hunter College’s first-ever Upper East Side dorm come home to. The seven-story, 158-bed dorm is in a vibrant, safe neighborhood and features apartment-style living close to campus.

The building, on East 79th Street near First Avenue, is set up so that students can create a community with their roommates rather than be restricted to a traditional dorm room. The dorm represents a real coup for the students, who are creating deep bonds and forming lifelong friendships.”

THE NEW SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR CALLS
An Education Conversation with City Leaders

S oon after he was appointed to be the New York City schools chancellor, Richard A. Carranza accepted Hunter College’s invitation to a “working dinner” with three dozen of the city’s business, philanthropic, and education leaders. It was only natural that Hunter College, a major partner with the City’s Department of Education (NYCDOE) and one that’s responsible for training 10 percent of its teachers, hosted the event.

Among the attendees were Dana Zucker, executive director of the Gray Foundation, and Jackie and Mike Benn, co-founders as well as president and vice president of the Bezos Family Foundation. Jody Arnhold, who chairs Hunter’s Dance Advisory Board and advises the NYCDOE on arts education, brought her perspective as a dance educator.

The conversation was lively, covering topics ranging from professional development for teachers to forging strong partnerships with business and community leaders. “The chancellor’s priorities align well with the work we’re doing here at Hunter,” said Michael Middleton, the Klara and Milton Petrie Dean of Hunter’s School of Education, who attended the dinner.

Among the programs discussed was Hunter’s partnership with PS/MS 7, a cornerstone of the College’s All In East Harlem initiative. That effort unites the entire Hunter community to transform PS/MS 7 into a model elementary and middle school. Hunter undergraduates mentor youngsters at the school. Students from the Silberman School of Social Work complete field placements there, providing vital services to children struggling with bullying, family stress, or behavioral issues. And Hunter’s School of Education delivers invaluable instructional coaching to PS/MS 7 teachers.

“Since its inception, Hunter’s mission has been to support the city’s public school system,” Middleton said. “Our reinvented partnership with the new chancellor will build on that legacy.”

ARTHUR ELGORT ’64
Hunter’s Gift to Fashion

Fashion photographer Arthur Elgort’s “breezy, wonderfully inventive style” changed people’s understanding of what fashion is, said President Raab in presenting the Class of ’64 alumnus with an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. More important, she continued, Elgort “changed our concept of what the modern woman is—placing her firmly and boldly in the real world, where we can see her character and feel her energy.”

It was praise warmly endorsed by the audience of fashion-world icons who attended the ceremony. Supermodel Christy Turlington thanked Elgort for nurturing her career and making every photo shoot “a joyful learning experience.” And Vogue editor Grace Coddington told him, “You brought freshness and life to fashion photography.”

Where did Elgort gain the ability to make such a dazzling impact? Where else but Hunter! He was one of the dozen or so male students on the Manhattan campus in 1964. Originally a painting major, he changed direction after becoming the college’s most sought-after photographer. In the process, he learned to recognize and respect the spirit of the bright, ambitious young women around him, an experience that would eventually shape his style—and that of modern fashion photography.

Surrounded by his talented family (top photo), Elgort gratefully acknowledged his debt to Hunter. It was, he said, the place “where I learned what I was going to become.” It’s a debt he’s repaid in full—as President Raab told him: “You brought credit to your alma mater, demonstrating through your lifetime of achievements that Hunter is the public college that transforms lives.”
Drs. Ruth Finkelstein, ScD, wants to help New York City’s older adults live better. And since becoming the Rose Daldec Executive Director of the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging at Hunter College in January 2018, she’s in a perfect position to identify, support and implement practices that improve the lives of older New Yorkers.

“Rather than looking at aging as a state of decline, I see it as a part of life that is as full of opportunities as it is of challenges,” says Dr. Finkelstein, who is also a professor of public health and aging at the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging. “There is a lot of work being done to transforming the public’s understanding of aging. For nearly 40 years, the Brookdale Center has been a leader in promoting the health and well-being of older Americans. With the country’s rapidly aging population, that work is more critical than ever, and Dr. Finkelstein is determined to meet the challenge with improved practitioner training, more active policy engagement, expanded access to cultural programming and a deepened commitment to applied research. That work starts close to home by ensuring that Hunter itself embodies the values and practices advocated by Brookdale. In fact, one of the first things Dr. Finkelstein did after joining Hunter was to work with Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab to make it the first public college in the United States to join the Global Network of Age-Friendly Universities.

“Ruth has completely reimagined Brookdale’s potential to foster healthy aging,” says President Raab. “I’m so inspired by the way she has brought together our entire community to improve the health and well-being of older New Yorkers.”

One program being designed by Dr. Finkelstein and her colleagues is a pilot program of Social Work that will connect students from that school with older adults who live near campus and have a spare bedroom. As “roommates,” both would benefit, with students paying a reasonable rent and the seniors reaping their own housing expenses. The program, called SOMA: Student-Older Adult Roommates, would be a win-win for the building social workers (who gain valuable exposure to a population they’ll likely work with in their careers) and the seniors (who enjoy having a young person around whom they can turn to in need).

In addition to that collaboration, Dr. Finkelstein is also partnering with two faculty members from Hunter’s School of Nursing—Dr. Elizabeth Cohn, the Rubin Professor of Nursing, and Dr. Elisabeth Capezent, the Hearst Foundation Chair in Gerontology—to improve medical research involving elderly participants. Together, they aim to identify strategies to better recruit older adults of color and from other diverse identities to participate in medical studies, ensuring that lessons learned through that vital research benefit all.

Another persistent challenge faced by older Americans is age discrimination, and Dr. Finkelstein recognizes that we need to shine a spotlight on those discriminatory practices in order to end them. With generous funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Dr. Finkelstein created a new role for an inaugural Senior Fellow at Brookdale, recruiting award-winning investi- gative journalist Peter Gosselin to fill that role. At Brookdale, he’ll bring much-needed attention to ageism and other challenges faced by elderly New Yorkers, while also highlighting the research-based solutions Brookdale has identified to solve them.

“As people age, their needs change,” Dr. Finkelstein says. “I feel so fortunate to be able to take advantage of the incredible resources and expertise available at Hunter and ensure that we’re doing all we can to improve the health and well-being of older people in our community.”

Brookdale Leads the Charge Against Elder Financial Abuse

Every year, billions of dollars are stolen through the financial exploitation of vulnerable individuals, many of them elderly. Since 1993, the Rose Daldec Elder Abuse Prevention Project—part of Brookdale’s Audio Institute for Law and Public Policy—has played a leading role in curbing that abuse. Through that project, Brookdale provides professional training to help lawyers, advocates, social workers and medical professionals recognize and prevent financial exploitation of their elderly clients. Now, a new $150,000, two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Justice will enable Brookdale to do even more. The grant will fund development of an online platform that will empower financial professionals to spot early indicators of financial exploitation and report those concerns to a consortium of colleges across the securities and banking industries. By sharing information in this way, the platform will improve prevention of financial exploitation cases while also preventing many instances of fraud from occurring in the first place. Hunter College researchers will also play a critical role in evaluating the new platform, so it can be optimized and rolled out widely to better protect seniors.

For Senior Auditors, Class Is In Session

One way that Hunter embraces the practices advocated by Brookdale is by creating plenty of opportunities for older adults to stay involved with research here at Hunter College—and pay no tuition, just a low $80 registration and services fee. With a wide range of course offerings to choose from, senior auditors will find something that piques their interest, be it literature, drama, dance or mathematics. And thanks to the inter- generational classroom experience that results when a senior citizen audits a class, the students will learn a great deal in that enrolled in that particular course benefit, too.

Whenever those lifelong learners feel like taking an on-campus lunch or coffee break, they can head to the Senior Lounge or the lower level of Hunter North, where they can enjoy coffee and tea, cookies and conversation.

“It’s a quiet oasis where seniors come to just read the paper, relax and have a cup of coffee,” says Peter Remch, president of Hunter’s Senior Citizens Student Association and a senior auditor for six years. “There comes a point in a senior auditor’s day when we need a place to go to, and this is that spot.”

The SCSA runs the cozy lounge, which provides complimentary newspapers and magazines along with access to a host of valuable services for seniors, including assistance creating a CUNYfirst account and registering for Hunter courses. The SCSA also hosts monthly free lunches with speakers as well as occasional free trips to cultural institutions like Carnegie Hall. The cost of a SCSA membership is $10 per semester. More than 200 people have joined the SCSA, says Remch, who has fulfilled his lifelong dream of studying mathematics as a senior auditor. He says his fellow lounge-goers audit classes in the arts as well as in religion, sociology and archeology.

“They audit classes here at Hunter because it makes their lives richer,” Remch says. “And to be able to class at Hunter promotes their social and intellectual interests.”

So, to be eligible to be a senior auditor, an individual must be a New York State resident 60 years of age or older. If you’re interested in learning more, email admissions@hunter.cuny.edu.

“ANNIE,” YOU’VE AGED: Remaking a Classic Film With a Gray-haired Cast

Harry Miller started taking acting classes at Hunter College at an age when most actors are long retired: 75! But he didn’t get his “big break” until 94, when he was cast in a reboot of Woody Allen’s “Annie Hall” as Alvy Singer—the leading role Allen held in the 1977 classic. Miller, who attends dancing and acting classes at Hunter as a senior auditor and who often hangs out in the Senior Lounge, found that his Hunter training proved useful when he was tapped to audition for “My Annie Hall” at the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, where he is a regular. Miller not only tapped for the film but sang Fred Astaire’s “I Wanna Be a Dancer” Man.” Hunter’s Theatre Department recently hosted a screening of the film, followed by a lively panel discussion with Miller and his co-star, Shula Chernick, directors Matt Starr and Elli Sachs.

Peter Gosselin welcomed the stars and directors of “My Annie Hall” to a film screening at Brookdale Center.

Peter Remch

“ANNIE,” YOU’VE AGED: Remaking a Classic Film With a Gray-haired Cast

Harry Miller returns the famous lebster scene from “Annie Hall” (Photo Courtesy of Matt Starr & Elli Sachs.)

Starr and Ell Sachs, and Ruth Finkelstein, director for the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging. In addition to acting, Miller has audited classes in directing and playwriting. Recently, though, he stopped taking contemporary dance classes. “I can’t do all that rolling around on the floor that modern dancers do,” he says. “I’ve switched to all ballet.”

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2018 HUNTER HALL OF FAME

Dr. Patricia E. Bath ’64 is an ophthalmologist and inventor who was the first African-American woman to receive a medical patent. While at Hunter, Bath co-founded an undergraduate science organization formed after Haiti’s devastating 2010 earthquake.

José Calderón ’97, president of the Hispanic Federation, is a leading advocate for Hispanic grassroots organizations and pro-Latino legislation in New York City and nationwide. He graduated summa cum laude from Hunter and then earned an MA from St. John’s University with a concentration in Latin American studies and Spanish literature. In addition to elevating the Federation into a powerful voice for social justice, he is known nationally as an advocate for high-quality public schools, accessible health care, increased voter engagement and environmental protection. After Hurricane María devastated Puerto Rico last fall, Calderón traveled to the island to supply emergency provisions and support rebuilding efforts. Many students from his alma mater joined him in that work, volunteering last summer as part of the New York Stands with Puerto Rico Recovery and Rebuilding Initiative.

Robert T. Barry ’57, MA ’63 is a founder of conceptual art in the United States whose work pushes beyond the physical limits of objects to explore their hidden or unperceived aspects, including their surrounding environments. At Hunter, Barry studied under William Baziotes and Robert Motherwell. He later became a Hunter faculty member himself, teaching at the College for 15 years. Barry’s work has been exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the U.S. and around the globe and is included in the permanent collections of MoMA, the Guggenheim, the Whitney, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, among others. As a guest artist, he has taught at the California Institute of Art, Ecole des Beaux Arts and other distinguished institutions.

Etta May Ladson ’51, MA ’61 has a distinguished career in education. She founded and directs the African Christian Teachers Association, which provides financial aid to gifted children in Queens, and has been honored for her achievements as a teacher and education advocate.

Josue F. Holman ’95, MSN ’98, ANP ’2000 taught nursing at Hunter for 25 years and has a distinguished record of international nursing service. He co-founded Promoting Health in Haiti, a nursing education organization formed after Haiti’s devastating 2010 earthquake.

Rhonda O’Reilly-Bovell ’96, a city educator for more than 25 years, joined the New York City Police Department after graduating from Hunter and rose steadily through the ranks. She was named captain in 2014 and deputy inspector in 2017. She is currently the commanding officer of the 7th Precinct.

Geraldine A. Robertson Swanson ’71 was a city educator for more than 25 years. Ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Diocese of New York in 1997, she was elected to the Board of Directors of the Association for Episcopal Deacons for two terms and now serves on the Board of the Fund for the Diocesan
Theodosea ‘Theo’ Hejda Silas, who died on September 4, 2017, was born in New York City and graduated cum laude with a BA in fine arts from Hunter College in 1959. She worked in New York as a teacher, writer and magazine editor. “Theo” Silas and her family moved to Bartlesville, Oklahoma in 1977, where she was a major contributor to her community’s artistic and cultural life. She was a founder and the first president of the Bartlesville Museum and Sculpture Garden, now the Price Tower Arts Center, and was a board member of the Oklahoma Nature Conservancy. In 1991, she and her husband, C.J. “Pete” Silas, a retired chairman and chief executive officer of Phillips Petroleum Company, established the Silas Foundation to support the arts, education and other causes. Silas was honored with the Hunter College Alumni Association’s Award for Outstanding Community Service and was inducted into the Hunter College Hall of Fame.

Jacqueline G. Wilson ’51, who died on September 15, 2018, was a longtime Hunter leader, a member of Hunter’s Hall of Fame, and a president of the Alumni Association. Wilson, who majored in history at Hunter, enjoyed a successful career in the health professions. She retired from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where she served as deputy regional administrator of the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA). She received many awards during her years with the HCFA, including the Commissioner’s Citation—the top award given by the Social Security Administration—and the Health and Human Services Secretary’s Superior Service Award.

Jacqueline G. Wilson ’51
(1929-1918)
MEET FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER
MARSHALL SONENSHINE

Shortly after his youngest son, Jacob Sonenshine ’18, transferred to Hunter College, Marshall Sonenshine was invited to join the Board of the Hunter College Foundation. He embraced the opportunity right away, because he has always been committed to public education. “Public education is one of the most important ingredients in a successful civilization,” says Sonenshine, chairman of Sonenshine Partners, a global investment banking firm. “Besides health and safety, education is the most important thing a civilization can offer. Without it, we are in trouble. With it, we are vibrant and wonderful.”

Although his father graduated from Brooklyn College and his youngest son graduated from Hunter, Sonenshine himself had a private school upbringing. After earning a bachelor’s degree from Brown University and then finishing Harvard Law School, where he served as an editor of the Harvard Law Review, Sonenshine began his banking career at Salomon Brothers, later working at several other firms before founding Sonenshine Partners in 2000. In addition to his full-time role as an investment banker, Sonenshine was for many years a professor of finance and economics at Columbia University. He currently teaches at Harvard Law School and is a past chairman of the Harvard Law School Fund.

At Hunter, Sonenshine chairs the Foundation’s Investment Committee. It’s a role he takes very seriously. “It’s been impressive to see what’s going on at Hunter with the endowment fund, which is an investment in our sustainability and all about our future,” he says. “Our endowment fund has become critically important to enriching academic offerings and expanding student programs at Hunter.”

As for what he is most passionate about improving at Hunter, Sonenshine says, “I am all about one word: quality. I don’t believe there should be any distinction in quality between what is available at a private versus a public school.” He aims to ensure that Hunter continues to provide students with faculty and programs on a par with those at top private universities. Sonenshine, a champion of the arts who has a long history of supporting cultural institutions in New York City, served on the boards of Jazz at Lincoln Center and the International Center of Photography. He’s currently on the Hunter College Theatre Advisory Board, which is a natural fit: he is a longtime theatre aficionado and his middle son is a producer and director for theatre and film. Sonenshine recently took in a performance of the Hunter Theater Project’s acclaimed adaptation of “Uncle Vanya,” which won rave reviews from critics in the New York Times, Washington Post, and NPR. He is especially pleased that many residents from the neighborhood around Hunter turned out to see the play.

“At Hunter, we are using theatre to engage our community on our campus,” Sonenshine said. “And that is what great universities like Hunter should do.”