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# THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE

# WANGUARD

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Wednesday, January 29

# THE BUST

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# Zain Qureshi and Nailah Pressley Step Down From USG



Carlos and Nailah BC USG President/VP Facebook



Zain Qureshi's Facebook

By Ryan Schwach  
*Managing Editor*

Brooklyn College's Undergraduate Student Government (USG) had a rocky start to its second semester, as both Press Director Nailah Pressley and Student Advocate Zain Qureshi resigned their positions over winter break.

As reported by the Vanguard last September, Pressley and Qureshi were both midsemester replacements for appointees who ran on Taylor's ticket in last spring's USG election and resigned over the

summer. Pressley and Qureshi both ran as Vice Presidential candidates on the tickets of Taylor's opponents.

These two resignations come after a slew of departures in both the executive and legislative branches of USG, including that of former Vice President Ethan Milich in November.

"We are always sad to see members of our team leave, but we understand the importance of pushing forward," said USG President Alyssa Taylor in a statement to the Vanguard. "It is not uncommon for members

of Student Government to change throughout the fiscal year. What has changed this year is a persistence to fill the position with the right candidate, therefore the vacancies are more publicized than in the past," she said.

Qureshi currently cites "personal reasons" for stepping down. Nailah Pressley declined to comment on the reasons why, instead telling Vanguard, "I do believe all things happen for a reason, and this was probably the best decision for the parties involved." Pressley went

on to wish the executive board "the best of luck in their endeavors," while Qureshi hopes his replacement "continues the work" from last semester.

USG is currently searching for candidates to fill these positions via an online form, and plans on conducting interviews to find the most qualified and motivated candidate.

"We truly believe in uniting the campus, and to do that we are reaching out to more than the already involved pool of students," said Taylor.

## Campus Events

### Wednesday, January 29

**Sigma Lambda Beta  
Fraternity Chapter  
Meeting**

**5:00 PM - 8:30 PM**

**Aviary Conference Room  
Stubo (4th floor)**

**Alpha Xi Delta Fraternity  
Weekly Meeting**

**6:45 PM - 10:00 PM**

**Glenwood Lounge Stubo  
(2nd floor)**

### Thursday, January 30

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,  
Transgender Alliance  
Welcome Back Meeting**

**12:30 PM - 2:00 PM**

**Bedford Lounge**

**Muslims Giving Back  
Welcome Back Meeting**

**12:30 PM - 2:15 PM**

**Penthouse Stubo (7th  
floor)**

### Friday, January 31

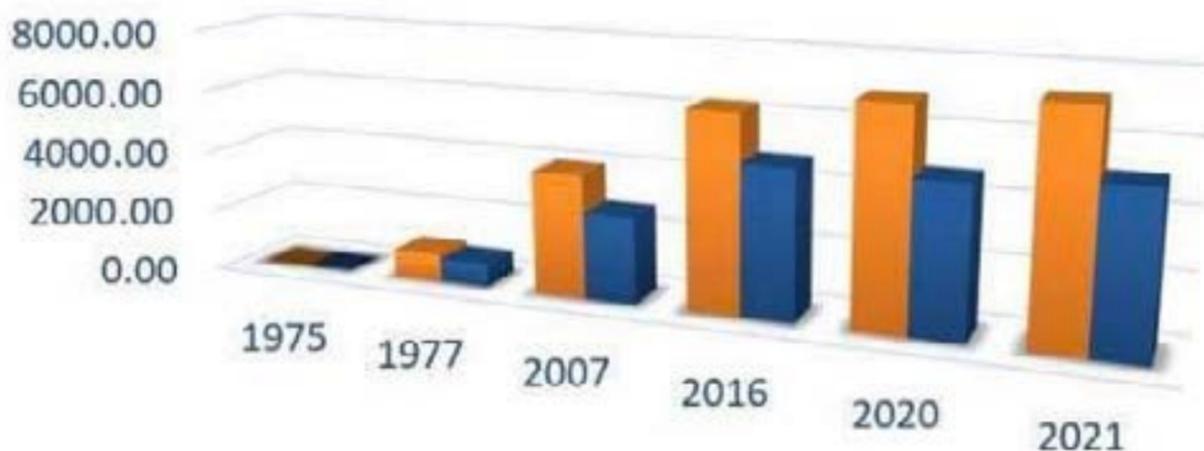
**Islamic Society's  
Jummah Gathering**

**1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**

**Stubo Alumni Lounge  
(4th floor)**

# Students Protest Tuition Hikes and “Wellness Fee”

## Tuition Hikes 1977-2021



	1975	1977	2007	2016	2020	2021
Senior Colleges	0.00	\$925	\$4,000	\$6,330	\$6,930	\$7,250
Community Colleges	0.00	\$775	\$2,800	\$4,800	\$4,800	\$5,120

■ Senior Colleges ■ Community Colleges

Courtesy of Fay Yanofski

By Natalina Zieman  
*Staff Writer*

On, Dec. 16, 2019, the CUNY Board of Trustees approved a budget proposal for a health and wellness fee on student tuition of \$120 per year, on top of a \$200 overall hike on students. The tuition hike passed despite protests by students and educators from Free CUNY!, an advocacy group that fights for free higher education for the city of New York.

The health and wellness fee is a fee that students will be charged per semester that is dedicated to the health and wellness departments, which provide students with physical and mental health care on campus. According to CUNY, the health and wellness fee will help fund the health departments which serve students with physical and mental health, providing them with health professionals and counselors.

Student activists are not convinced.

“The governor passed SUNY2020 back in 2011 promising that our tuition hikes would go towards enhancing student support services,” explained University Student Senate (USS) Chairperson, Timothy Hunter. “Instead, our tuition dollars are filled in state budget gaps; while tuition has increased more than 40% since 2011, state investment per student has declined by 20%.”

Students and faculty gathered at the Board of Trustees’ meeting at Baruch College Vertical Campus to protest the budget that affects all CUNY students. The meeting, they say, was not publicized.

“The efforts they go to to keep this information hidden is done so they can quietly pass these violent tuition raises,” said Hailey Lam, a Free CUNY! activist and Brooklyn College student. “Basically, the tuition raise is going to be continuous, it’s something they’ve voted on years ago and they

pretend to vote on it every year to make it more palatable.

“The fee is what’s new and unprecedented,” Lam continued. “It enables them to skirt around a lot of processes that they usually have to go through for a tuition hike.”

Despite efforts by lobbyists, and the protests of CUNY students and faculty, the Board of Trustees went ahead and approved the budget. CUNY argues that the tuition hike and fees do not affect most students since many of them are granted financial aid.

“We are proud of our affordable value: two out of three CUNY undergraduate students do not pay for tuition and fees out of pocket, and three out of four of our graduates leave debt free,” CUNY’s official budget request document for 2021 states.

The NYPD was called were called to control the protesters at the Board of Trustees meeting. Lam was one of a few students detained by

officers because of their affiliation with Free CUNY!.

“They had me in cuffs, had done a background search and a physical search on me, and had the summons in their hands ready to give me,” Lam explained.

The efforts to bring halts to tuition raises extend past just Free CUNY! USS has also taken a role in combating the annual raises.

“We have a packed semester filled with actions to get us a tuition freeze and eventually free CUNY. Also, hopefully within the month, we’re looking to introduce in the state legislature a bill called ‘a new deal for CUNY’ which will be the first free and fully funding CUNY bill ever in history,” said Smitha Varghese, USS Legislative Director. The USS staff is working tirelessly to help CUNY students afford their education. “I’ve actually been in Albany for two days actively lobbying senators against the tuition hike, calling for a tuition freeze,

filling in the tap gap, and transitioning into a free and fully funded CUNY,” Varghese explained.

Although the tuition freeze would be beneficial, Free CUNY!’s long-term goal is for a free and fully funded CUNY system. “We use a diversity of tactics, including disrupting BOT hearings, to collaborating with city-wide community organizations,” said Lam. “Our larger 2020 vision is a campus wide strike, which involves a series of escalating actions and solidarity building with staff, faculty and other students. Which is how we will attain a free CUNY.”



# Jumaane Williams Holds “State of the People” Address at Brooklyn College

By Ryan Schwach  
Managing Editor

Brooklyn College alum Jumaane Williams gave the first-ever “State of the People” address after he was sworn in as the 6th Public Advocate of New York City in Ingersoll Hall last Wednesday, Jan. 22.

Williams was elected in November after running unopposed, having previously won a 19-candidate special election in March 2019, with 33% of the vote after his predecessor Letitia James left to become the state Attorney General. Williams was officially sworn into office in March after the special election (something about noncompetitive election here?)

Williams has long been “one of our [college’s] favorite sons,” as BC President Michelle Anderson put it. As the event’s first speaker, she talked about Williams’s activity on campus as an activist and student government member in the early 2000s.

“He is a staunch supporter of CUNY,” said Anderson.

He also previously served as City Councilman for NYC’s 45th District (which includes Brooklyn College) from 2010 to 2019.



Jumaane Williams speaking at Brooklyn College. / Ryan Schwach

Williams was sworn in by his mother Patricia, as well as Mark J. Green, who was elected NYC’s first Public Advocate back in 1993.

During the first “State of the People” address, which he hopes can become a tradition for the office going forward, Williams discussed his plans for 2020 and beyond, as well as touting his accomplishments in his first ten months in office.

“The people are the core of New York City,” Williams told the crowd. As if to demonstrate, he was flanked on either side by screens which played videos of New Yorkers voicing their grievances (several of whom were in attendance and called out). Williams talked about his priorities for the future regarding housing, safety,

education, and overall equality.

“We are going to help New Yorkers go home,” Williams said, as he discussed low-income housing, rent control, and making it harder for landlords to evict their tenants. He says in the coming months he plans to introduce the “Worst Landlord Accountability Act” to control the actions of landlords facing violations.

Williams specifically called out the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), which just last month topped the Public Advocate’s list of the worst landlords in New York City. He called for increased funding and better management of that funding for what he called “the most culpable, least responsive developments in the city.”

Another sticking point

for Williams was one of his major issues - education.

“I am a public school baby from preschool through college, and it is from preschool to college we are failing our students,” said Williams. In addition to addressing the “chronic underfunding,” affecting Brooklyn College and CUNY. Williams also specifically spoke about the segregation of New York City schools, which he called the most segregated in the country.

“We not only live in a tale of two cities, but in a tale of two school systems,” said a Brooklyn College sophomore who spoke in one of the videos. “We are pushing the mayor and the governor to commit to students with real sustainable funding and we plan on holding

to that commitment,” said Williams.

Pushing through technical difficulties with the videos stopping before they were supposed to end, Williams spoke about workers’ rights, specifically mentioning paid time off and his proposed “Right to Relax” legislation, which would institute paid time off.

“Over the next two years, we are going to continue our work to reshape this city,” he said, concluding his nearly 40-minute address in room 148 of Ingersoll Hall. “The state of the people is strong and with that strength we are going to push forward to new heights in New York City. [...] Let’s get moving.”

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# BC Professor Shares Holocaust Experience, Decries Climate Denial

By Gabriela Flores  
Staff Writer  
Reporting Assistance  
From Quiara Vasquez

To commemorate the annual International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Brooklyn College physics professor Micha Tomkiewicz shared his own experience as a Holocaust survivor during his lecture, “When the Past Writes the Present: From Holocaust to Climate Change.”

Born three months before Germany’s invasion of Poland in 1939, Tomkiewicz has little recollection of his early childhood within the genocide. After living as a “hidden child” with a Christian family for four years, Tomkiewicz and his family were lured out of hiding into a hotel where they were told they could buy foreign papers and flee to the Americas. This turned out to be a trap, and the Tomkiewiczes were instead sent to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Tomkiewicz admits he doesn’t know how he survived the Holocaust.

“I have no real answer to this query except that I was one of the lucky ones,” he said during his presentation.

Two years and one near-fatal case of typhus later, Tomkiewicz’s liberation came unexpectedly on a train ride wandering west of Bergen-Belsen camp, when he was freed by the US Army’s 743rd Tank Battalion.

According to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1.5 million Jewish children died under the Nazi regime. Approximately 6 million Jews and 11 million others were killed. To

ensure these mass killings of the Holocaust becomes a history that “prevents future genocides,” the United Nations adopted a remembrance day in 2005.

“The Holocaust history is clean and clear: you know who to hate, you know who to love, you know who to feel sorry about,” stated Tomkiewicz.

Nonetheless, personal accounts of survivors and documentation provided by credible sources like the UN are not enough for anti-Semitic and Holocaust denials. Some continue to believe World War II is a hoax. Tomkiewicz is very aware of these conspiracy theorists.

“For guys like that, I am a target,” said Tomkiewicz.

To Tomkiewicz, the Nazi-led genocide of his childhood and present climate change crisis have one significant similarity: deniers. On his blog Climate Change Fork, Tomkiewicz argues the Holocaust continued as a consequence of inaction against the Nazi regime and Hitler’s agenda shared in Mein Kampf. The autobiographical manifesto demonstrated Hitler’s anti-Semitic views and intent in mobilizing against “all who are not of a good race,” but many ignored the evidence, which allowed his “final solution” to come to fruition. Similarly, Tomkiewicz believes that denial of environmental destructions, such as loss of biodiversity and high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, could lead us humans to our ‘global suicide.’

“I am not suggesting that the Holocaust is just like climate change,” Tomkiewicz wrote in a blog post. “My use of



Micha Tomkiewicz. / Quiara Vasquez

the term self-inflicted genocide refers to the relatively distant future, while the Holocaust refers to a confirmed past event.” The critical difference between these events, he says, is that the Holocaust was a “man-on-man genocide,” whereas today’s climate change crisis can become a “self-inflicted genocide.”

Tomkiewicz has dealt with a range of responses to his comparison. For Mark Hoofnagle, blog writer of “Is the holocaust denial/climate change denial comparison apt?,” the observed similarity between the two events is unnecessary in the discussion of denialism.

“I do not think that a moral comparison need be made between Holocaust deniers and climate change denials,” stated Hoofnagle. “The only comparison needed is between their tactics, which are dishonest and

intellectually bankrupt.”

On the other hand, others share similar thoughts with Tomkiewicz. In 2019, novelist and NYU creative writing professor Jonathan Safran Foer wrote *We Are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast*. According to *The Guardian*, the author encourages the reader to demonstrate a “different kind of heroism” to combat climate change. Foer concludes by referencing the “unobvious need for sacrifice” his grandmother had when fleeing Poland before the Holocaust annihilation began.

“Climate catastrophe is ungraspable, just like the Holocaust,” wrote Foer.

Since visiting the Bergen-Belsen camp in 2002, and reconnecting with his buried past as a Holocaust survivor, Professor Tomkiewicz engages in remembrance reunions alongside

the genocide’s “last living generation.” In a time where opinions on climate change are polarizing, Tomkiewicz has intertwined his background in the Holocaust with physical chemistry to educate students on the severity of our current environmental conditions. Nevertheless, his warning of the ‘self-inflicted genocide’ is one perspective that may differ from another educator’s beliefs.

“This is why we keep you guys [students] skeptical when it comes to class. Bottom line is that you have to do your own research. Your own research will determine who you believe or don’t believe,” advised Tomkiewicz. “It’s all in your hands. You cannot let a professor or anyone dictate your outlook for life.”

# Journalists Address Issues With Reporting on Puerto Rico



L-R: Carla Minet, Adrian Florido, Nick Brown, Patricia Mazzei and Luis Trelles. / Moises Taveras

By Moises Taveras  
*Features Editor*

The Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism hosted a panel this past week concerning the accountability of reporters tasked with covering Puerto Rico. The panel, replete with an all-star cast of journalists, concerned itself with what stories find Puerto Rico in the spotlight, the failures of many reporters to treat the people with respect, and how we should be covering cockfighting, among other things. In light of recent protests and natural disasters, which have brought unprecedented attention to the island nation, they had gathered there with a united goal: to do better by Puerto Rico.

The panel kicked off with a speech delivered by CUNY Chancellor Felix V. Matos Rodriguez, himself a native Puerto Rican, which set the stage for the following hour long discussion. Matos praised the efforts of the graduate school, which has a Spanish language journalism program (the first of its kind in the country) interested in training bilingual speakers to cover Latinx communities, including Puerto Rico. A special shoutout was given to the Centro de Periodismo Investigativo (The Center for Investigative Journalism) or CPI, for their groundbreaking efforts in uncovering the corruption of former

Puerto Rican governor Ricardo Rosselló. When the CPI exposed Rosselló's misogyny and racism, among other horrific traits, last summer, it sparked protests the likes of which Puerto Rico had never seen, resulting in his resignation.

"This was the modern day equivalent of publishing the Pentagon Papers in the New York Times and it all started from a journalistic mission to expose wrongdoing," Matos told the packed conference room, highlighting the importance of the work of a journalist. "We need to listen better, care more, and hold our attention just a little more. Well-trained journalists, like the one that the J-school is graduating, are naturals in this line of work."

After the chancellor's remarks, the panelists and moderator took the stage. The panelists were Carla Minet from CPI, Patricia Mazzei of the New York Times, Adrian Florido from NPR, and Nick Brown from Reuters; the panel was moderated by NPR's Luis Trelles. Their conversation centered on the unfortunate conditions that have kept Puerto Rico in the headlines.

"I think unfortunately we're in sort of a news cycle climate where only the biggest stories compete with the biggest stories," Mazzei said. "We should go down there when there's a big story. But then we should also go back to talk about the schools and

the cockfighting and you know, the cultural stories. A million other things have also happened."

She and the other panelists have attempted to cover Puerto Rico in ways beyond just its ugliest moments, but the way the business works can be a restraint.

"How do we keep that storyline being sort of front and center too is hard, because you get three minutes sometimes on the radio," said Florido, who works for NPR. "You know, you get twelve-hundred words."

"Four hundred," Brown murmured. "Ouch," Trelles interjected. The laugh the room and panelists let out indicated that this was a common source of contention in the newsroom.

Florido is now based out of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Hurricane Maria was what drew him to the island (for work), but it also motivated him to continue pushing for coverage at NPR. The move was welcomed by the leadership, resulting in him spending a year there, granting him the ability to tell a range of diverse stories decidedly not solely focused on the island's disasters. With this year, he's been able to understand Puerto Rico's complicated history, develop relationships with its people, and understand things like its "colonial relationship [and] unequal power dynamic with the United States."

"You can say it, but you

don't really know what that means, you don't know what that feels like, you don't internalize that until you start to have interpersonal relationships on the island," Florido said. The panel agreed: it's important to be deeply entrenched in your subject.

This entrenchment is what the recurring cockfighting story is all about. When the U.S. Congress ruled to abolish cockfighting in Puerto Rico, Mazzei and Florido both found that the more interesting story wasn't the ruling, but the average Puerto Rican's perspective on it.

"It was a story about Congress deciding this and Puerto Ricans not getting a say," Mazzei said. "And even people who have no interest in continuing cockfighting in Puerto Rico were like 'but we sort of wish we had gotten a vote or that somebody had asked us.'"

This became the opportunity to "tell a bigger story through a smaller story," as Mazzei put it, and diversify the coverage of Puerto Rico.

Reuters' Nick Brown continued down this line of thinking, opening that "becoming a student of history" helped him avoid clichés and generalization and really relay the stories of Puerto Rico to his audience.

"All of these things are not happening in a vacuum," Brown said. "All of these things are being exacerbated, if not caused,

by events whose seeds were sown decades ago and by the fundamental fact of Puerto Rico's status."

Instead of running with the presumptions and stories of Puerto Rico being "cursed" to continually pursue the same narrative, Brown instead picked up a book of the financial history of the nation, and though he found it "dry" he also found that a firmer understanding of its history gave him the context to dig deeper for better, more profound stories.

As the only panelist from Puerto Rico, Carla Minet from CPI perhaps understood more than anyone else how to speak to Puerto Ricans, and how complicated it's been to be in conversation with them. For her and her team at the CPI, it's involved not just stories that treat the readership and subjects like humans, but stories that they may not have previously heard before.

While it has always been part of Reuters and Brown's job to relay the intricacies and less "scintillating" details of Puerto Rico's history regarding things such as pension, a triple tax exemption, and national debt, that coverage was made for an audience that didn't necessarily include the island's inhabitants. Minet and her team quickly found that no one was having these conversations with Puerto Rico itself and so the team made it their mission to.

**Continued on Page 7**

# Amidst Anti-Semitism Spike, CUNY Community Comes Together

By Chaya Gurkov & Quiara Vasquez  
Staff Writer & Editor-in-Chief

When BC professor Andrew Meyer checked his e-mail during the winter session, he came face-to-face with a hatred that New Yorkers have heard a lot about these past few months.

“The heading was ‘seeking truths about blacks and Jews,’” Meyer told the Vanguard. The e-mail encouraged recipients to print out, copy, and distribute pamphlets with slanderous anti-Semitic content. “The English was all grammatically strange, almost as if it was programmed under an algorithm. It was so gratuitously offensive and nihilistically geared toward hatred and spreading these lies, almost as if they were trying to reach someone mentally unstable and give them some ideas.”

Meyer wasn’t the only person to get this message. At least two other Brooklyn College professors received that same anti-Semitic e-mail; because the e-mail was

bcc’ed, the real number of recipients is likely significantly higher.

Tragically, these sort of anti-Semitic incidents have precedent. Over the course of these past few months, more violent anti-Semitic hate crimes and attacks have been cropping up in the news, and lately they have been hitting closer to home in Brooklyn and the surrounding areas. Nine anti-Semitic attacks were reported to the NYPD over the course of Hanukkah; two attacks that occurred in Crown Heights on Dec. 24 were perpetrated against men wearing traditional-looking Jewish garb. A similar attack occurred in Borough Park the next day when a man wearing Hasidic clothing was allegedly punched in the face while walking home. To top it all off, police arrested a woman that Friday in Crown Heights after she slapped and yelled anti-Semitic slurs at three different Orthodox women in the street.

With this surge in hostility towards the openly religious, a

concern that’s making Jews question whether or not it’s safe to walk in the streets as identifiably Jewish anymore seems to be settling amongst the Orthodox communities.

“I think a lot of students and Jewish people are scared for their lives right now. It’s not hiding behind ‘anti-Zionism’ anymore, it’s straight out ‘kill the Jews,’” said Rabbi Moshe Raichik, a well-known and respected member of the Jewish Chabad movement and director of Chabad on BC Campus.

Rabbi Raichik blamed the upsurge in anti-Semitic behavior on jealousy, prejudices, and in particular, the hate speech of minister Louis Farrakhan.

“Louis Farrakhan spews anti-Semitism on a constant basis and has a huge following,” Raichik told the Vanguard. Maybe not coincidentally, a video of Farrakhan was included in the anti-Semitic e-mails that were sent around to numerous college professors.

Farrakhan has been recorded multiple times throughout his career making discriminatory

and out right anti-Semitic statements, most recently in October 2018 when he tweeted, “I am not anti-Semite. I am anti-Termite.” The tweet was deleted shortly thereafter.

Despite such displays of anti-Semitism, many people refused to accept that this may be a new reality, with a demonstration of unity and support for the Jewish community taking place on Sunday, Jan. 5th. Over 25,000 people attended a march across the Brooklyn Bridge to signify that there’s no place for anti-Semitism in America. Many prominent elected officials showed up and marched alongside the crowd to reinforce this critical message, as well as many CUNY students and faculty.

“I hoped to bring [to Brooklyn College] the sense of unity, the understanding that we cannot tolerate discrimination, and that we must stand up for each other during difficult times,” said Fay Yanofsky, a BC student and Vice Chair of Fiscal Affairs for CUNY’s University State Senate (USS). Yanofsky

is one of three openly religious members of the Jewish faith in the University State Senate, professing to be proud of the culture of diversity and inclusion at Brooklyn College.

Although the Jewish community shoulders the rise in hate, the support and fight for change ranges far past them. CUNY Chancellor Felix V. Matos Rodriguez was among the 25,000 marchers, saying, “I’m participating today in this march for no hate and no fear with New Yorkers of all faiths and all backgrounds.”

Beyond urging “each individual to do their part by extending their empathy towards people of diverse backgrounds,” President of BC Student Government, Alyssa Taylor, is overseeing the “We Stand Against Hate” initiative, started by BC President Michelle Anderson in 2017. The WSAH initiative was designed to give students a deeper comprehension on challenging topics through lectures, panels and discussions. Combatting anti-Semitism, an integral part

## Journalists Address Issues With Reporting on Puerto Rico

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Speaking about this experience, Minet told the audience, “It has been a learning experience for all of our team to understand very profound issues, you know, pension issues. When have we spoken about pensions before the debt crisis? Never. You know, you wouldn’t see a story about pensions in Puerto Rico...you know regularly or as a developing story.”

This failure to see Puerto Rico as a place with stories worth chronicling, is key to what made this panel stand out, and also key to the failures of many of their peers. Brown opined that American media attention

in Puerto Rico ebbed and flowed, only peaking when tragedy struck or political turmoil threatened U.S. interests, furthering the “cursed” or “troubled” narrative, without doing the work to explain why or how any of its troubles had come about, or pushing for resolution. Hearing Mazzei describe how journalists would descend on Miami whenever something happened in Puerto Rico felt like hearing a description of sharks drawn to blood or vultures circling a carcass. And while the panelists all understood this was the nature of their job, there was a tinge of disgust in their voices describing it.

But there’s reason to hope that coverage of Puerto



Courtesy of the Centro de Periodismo Investigativo's Twitter

Rico will take a turn for the better. It exists in the individuals on that stage, in that packed and concerned conference room, and in the fact that more and more journalists with ties to these places are coming into the workforce with

the will and resolve to tell those stories.

Sitting in that room filled with native Spanish speakers, I couldn’t help but feel like this was still a niche issue, and that it would fall on us to do that hard work for the rest of

the world. But hearing the fervor in the voices of the attendants, hearing the panelists themselves outline the issues, and seeing the work they’ve done, inspires some hope that we’ll do better by Puerto Rico.

## Black leadership, family legacy, a life steeped

## The Monument

His chin is up, head cocked to the left. Draped over his relaxed shoulders, the tattered cloth extends down and hangs over the solid base of the bronze bust. The weathered garb bears the mark of the artist's hand; as you walk around it, the visible indents of eager thumbs become apparent. Careful, imperfect, expressive and painterly. The year it was sculpted is engraved on the back of his shoulder, sloping downwards next to the signature of the artist. The bust's cloth detail harkens back to slavery, and evokes the pain and pride which the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has come to represent. Cast entirely in bronze, the rendering carries the likeness of the black cultural a n d

political leader, but pushes against a rigid historicity – the work itself folds layers of meaning onto the figure himself, as well as into American history. Standing at the foot of the stairs leading to the library and triumphantly overlooking the east quad towards Ingersoll Hall, it's but one example of the late Henderson Day "Bo" Walker's public monuments.

Bo had done sculptures and drawings of many black leaders, including Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey. Countless numbers of these works have fallen into the hands of private collectors, but the bust of Dr. King remains on campus.

"I remember being at the unveiling of the Martin Luther King bust. He was so honored and I was so proud of him that day. I was 10, and he passed when I was 11. It was really timely, really momentous. And there was the award, too. He had gotten that recognition right before he left this earth," said Bo's daughter, Panya Walker, as she remembers that day in 1985, when the sculpture was gifted to the College. There, Bo was also awarded the Presidential Medal in honor of his work for the black cultural community.

Bo's legacy of love for sculpture and for black cultural leaders is permanently imprinted onto the Brooklyn College campus. His story, and that of his family's, reaches past the five boroughs and extends far back into history, at one point crossing paths with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther

King Jr. himself.

As for many black Americans, the story begins in the segregated south.

Bo Walker was never extensively written about; most of what is known about the artist's life and work is passed down orally from his family and friends. His brother, Frank Walker, who lives and works as an artist in the family's native Charlottesville, Virginia, has many stories to tell first-hand.

The brothers were born in the basement of a local Charlottesville hospital, then the labor and delivery unit for black folk; Bo in 1951 and Frank in 1953. They had been drawing since their days in elementary school – sketching figures in their school workbooks, mimicking cartoons and comic book characters.

In the summer of 1967, Frank and Bo, as well as their two friends, Gerald E. "Gerry" Mitchell and Earl Gordon, showcased their art in the backyard of Mitchell's home. That day, the boys made a collective \$25 selling their drawings, which were pinned to clotheslines and strewn about the yard.

"That was way back when a hamburger cost five or ten cents, \$25 was a lot of money then. You're talkin' many moon pies and hamburgers down the road. Could've got diabetes from that one show!" Frank laughed, but the soliloquy soon turned somber. "and that was the start of it all, the four of us would all become artists. Now I'm the only one left," said Frank solemnly, as he recounted his bittersweet formative years in the



Bo Walker with his wife Jocelyn in 1985 at Brooklyn College. (photo by George Bing)



Bo Walker at his graduation from Pratt, holding his infant daughter. (photo courtesy of Panya Walker)

Spread photo courtesy of Panya Walker and Jack Coleman.

ped in art, and how our campus bust of Dr. King came to be.

# mental Bo Walker

by Jack Coleman

rancorous pre-integrated south.

In their adult lives, Gerry and Earl became art teachers, inspiring and passing on the torch to their community's youth for many years after that pivotal backyard show. In 2012, at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, a show entitled "From Backyard Clotheslines to Museum Walls," curated by Andrea Douglas, paid homage to that very day and included recent works from Frank and Gerry. Gerry died just a few months before the show in 2011, and Earl in 2016.

**When it was time** for the brothers to go off to college, Frank chose the Army, where he would eventually become a draftsman and Bo chose to go off to Stanford.

Though first exposed to sculpture at Stanford, Bo's passion for sculpture, which would come to define the rest of his artistic life, came to fruition at Pratt. A puppeteer friend of his at Pratt came to Bo with the task of designing and sculpting the heads for his puppets, Bo accepted. That, according to Panya, may have been the paradigm shift in his artistic career which led the artist to pursue sculpture.

After his brief stint at Stanford University, Bo ended up at the Pratt Institute, where he met Panya's mother, Jocelyn. In 1974, the year before Bo would graduate with honors, Panya was born.

"My mother always told me stories of my father going around the Pratt campus with me bundled in his arms," said Panya, beaming through the phone as she reminisced

about growing up in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. "When people would inquire about what he was holding, he would say: 'this is my newest masterpiece!'"

A few flights up an old freight elevator would lead to the spacious studio that Bo obtained after having graduated from Pratt, close to campus and not far from his family's home. That studio was the site of creation for many of his most famous works, including the bust of Dr. Martin Luther King, but it was also home to Panya's fondest memories of her father.

"With whatever he was working on, he would sit me down next to him and start working, and I would work too. As a parent, he was always present, he brought me into his world: He wouldn't just show me what he was doing, he would let me do it, too—let me get my hands dirty," recalled Panya, choking back tears as she tells of her transformative childhood visits to her father's studio.

Frank had similar stories about the studio, which he would always visit on his trips to New York from Virginia. For the brothers, their shared passion for art making was at the crux of their bond. And though they lived over 300 miles apart, they shared countless conversations over the phone, talking through their processes and bouncing ideas off of each other.

**Growing up in the segregated south**, the rich history of black folk was largely excluded from his education; instead, he was endlessly inspired by

his own research into his people's stories.

"Black history was hidden for so many years. We learned white history," Frank said. "You explored your people's history on your own, you gathered that material on your own. Or else you wouldn't know anything about yourself."

Bo and Frank never really knew their father, Henderson Day Walker. Both Panya and Frank insist that that's why Bo looked up so fervently to strong black male role models – he constantly sought to elevate leading black figures as integral to American history. The Walker brothers' mother, Marion Teresa Jackson Walker Price, who is now 94 years old and under Frank's care, was an educator and typist in her younger years before becoming a librarian. She comes from a long line of innovators, educators, community organizers and businessmen, all of whom were the subject of Bo's childhood stories.

In the late 19th century, Bo's great-great uncle, Rinaldo Jackson, began working as a stage manager and advertiser for a theater company in Charlottesville. (Among his clientele was Al Jolson, the infamous blackface performer.) Rinaldo passed the torch onto W.E. Jackson (Bo's great-uncle), who took the company even further, eventually subcontracting the business to an ad company in Richmond. The company came to be known as Jackson Poster Advertising, and a mainstay in the advertising world of Charlottesville. In the 1960's, when blacks were finally able to acquire

business licenses in Virginia, Jackson Poster Advertising expanded to an outdoor advertising franchise, meaning that anybody who wanted to advertise their business in Charlottesville, black or white, had to go through this black-owned company.

In the late 1950's, Bo's uncle Edward Jackson opened up the Bren-Wana. One of the first integrated restaurants in Charlottesville, the Bren was also a nightclub, a hotel, and a safe haven for black travellers who were not allowed to stay at commercial lodgings for white people. Situated on a hillside overlooking the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Bren played host to many jazz and blues musicians, including Duke Ellington's band.

It was here that the Walkers' path intersected with the King. In March of 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to Charlottesville to give a talk at the University of Virginia. The event, organized in part by the historian and activist Paul Gaston (also a professor of Panya's when she attended UVA), required King to stay overnight at the Gallery Court Motel. After the talk, with limited options for places to dine, King and his integrated group of activists and scholars stayed at the Bren-Wana.

**With these strong black figures** influencing his life and artistry, Bo Walker got to work, capturing their likenesses with a distinct reverence and idiosyncratic liveliness. At the Law School Library at Columbia University, there's a bronze bust of Paul Robeson. And, on a smaller scale, in the

collection of the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, up in Harlem, is Bo's Frederick Douglas Ikenga, an eccentric iron and wood sculpture that's a favorite of both Panya and Frank.

Bo's artistry extended to many different mediums as well, he was an avid photographer, did countless drawings in pen and ink, and worked as a restorer and historian of African art.

In 1986, within a year of the unveiling of the bust of Dr. King, Bo Walker passed away from pneumonia at the age of 35.

In the days after Bo's death, Frank went up to New York one last time, to clean out his brother's workplace. Before stepping into the studio, Frank had remained stoic in the face of his brother's passing, but the loft's large windows flooded the space light, and the smell of clay, wax, and paint was still fecund, lush in the air.

"Like a child," he said, "I wept and howled for the first and only time in my adult life."

**Thirty-five years later**, Bo's sculpture of Dr. King still stands on campus, seafoam green from oxidation, and nearly as old as its creator was. That sculpture also stands as a testament to the raw skill, craftsmanship, and spirit of its artist. For Panya and Frank, the sculpture represents their family's legacy of black resilience, entrepreneurship, and creativity— a tribute to the legacy of not one, but two great men.

# Fencing Team Sees Revival

## A club that was dead has been born again!



By John Schilling  
Staff Writer

Just a few months ago, Brooklyn College's Fencing Club seemed to be doomed due to a lack of funding and communication from the Undergraduate Student Government.

Beginning in Spring 2018, the Fencing Club was founded by Nick Wongshue and Farhad Rahman, the club's President and Treasurer, respectively. The club was originally funded by CLAS in the form of reimbursements, since the conversion of the new student government had not yet occurred. Wongshue recalls how easy it was to receive funding during this time. "Previously, the process of receiving funding was simple. We would fill out an excel spreadsheet of the items we were requesting and include the cost and the web address the item was from. Then we would attend a meeting to pitch our requests, and then we would wait for the approval," he said.

According to Rahman, the Fencing Club was unable to host

any formal meetings because there was a lack of communication from USG or Student Activities regarding the reallocation of the club's promised budget once the government turned over. Naturally, funding is of the utmost importance to the Fencing Club due to high expenses in the form of equipment, events, and refreshments.

Despite the looming question of funding, Wongshue revealed that the Fencing Club never actually died.

"The club was [last] active in the Fall 2019 semester. We were given the approval to have our meetings in the Student Center, but it was difficult to properly conduct our meetings in that room due to our club being a sport," said Wongshue.

This news came during a time of unrest at Brooklyn College regarding USG's funding allocations. In November 2019, many students expressed a great distaste with USG allotting a significant amount of money from the student activity fee to pay Joy Villa, a conservative singer-songwriter, to speak on

campus to a handful of students instead of using those funds to benefit the entire Brooklyn College community. The event in question was eventually canceled. This is something that resonates with both Wongshue and Rahman, who believe that students should have a say in what their money goes, and USG should have a more effective way of communicating it.

"The activity fee that all students pay should be equally distributed and readily available to all clubs and when there is an important activity that needs funding. I think a voting system or something of the sort should be in place when decisions like this," Wongshue said.

In December 2019, USG President Alyssa Taylor said she was unaware of the situation, but vowing to speak with the Treasurer, the Club Director, and Student Activities to "get a clearer picture of the situation."

After investigating the matter, Taylor told the Vanguard that the Fencing Club's registration was "pending."

"Any clubs not fully

active has their portal frozen and as a result they are unable to submit events and receive funding. Their inactive status is the result of missing paperwork," she said, "Within the bylaws USG, Article 2, Section 16, Point 7 states 'Grant requests shall not be approved for suspended organizations, even upon a vote of the Club Funding Council or Executive Cabinet,' therefore the Fencing Club may not receive funding," Taylor clarified.

As for the perceived lack of communication by Wongshue and Rahman, Taylor indicated this feeling to be mutual.

"It was expressed to us that the Fencing club e-board members have [been] contacted regarding this matter, and have not responded to communications at this time," said Taylor

With both sides eager to resolve this matter and move forward, it seems like the Fencing Club should get a new lease on life. When presented with the new information, Rahman confirmed having received a voicemail on November 27th from

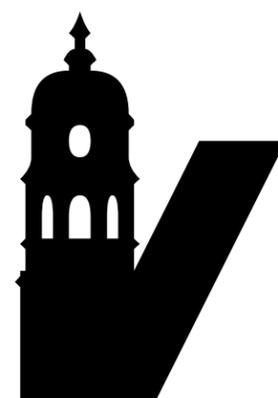
Student Activities.

Since then, Wongshue confirmed to the Vanguard that the club is currently "active," revealing that the club became "unfrozen" after they submitted their signature cards to Student Activities, as requested.

The matter, however, is still far from resolved.

"I have sent emails to the student government, but have not received a response to know the budget approval process. We last received funding in the spring of 2018 when the process was more robust but now I am confused about whether or not I will receive funding at all," Wongshue said.

Nonetheless, both Wongshue and Rahman are hopeful regarding the club's fate, but remain somewhat dubious.



# ROBERT VISCUSI 1941-2020

LONGTIME ENGLISH PROFESSOR & ITALIAN AMERICAN WRITER

By Qichelle Maitland  
Staff Writer

Robert Viscusi, longtime professor, pioneering Italian American writer, and Executive Officer of the Wolfe Institute for the Humanities at Brooklyn College, died on Sunday, Jan. 19. He was 78.

Born April 4, 1941 in Brooklyn, Viscusi came to Brooklyn College with a Bachelors in English from Fordham College and an M.A. in English from Cornell. He started his career as an adjunct lecturer at BC in 1968, but his passion for writing led him to become a Professor of English at the university.

As a descendant of Italians who migrated to the Americas through Ellis Island, Viscusi made his mark focusing on the Italian-American experience in New York City and the Americas. He recognized that there was a void here in New York and wanted to create a space for the Italian American community, which at the time was subject to prejudices brought on by their immigrant status. Viscusi was an advocate for education in the community, combating the stereotype that Italian Americans were anti-intellectual.

"We became friends... travelling back and forth to Italy, advocating for the scholarships of Italian American students to further their education and study abroad," said Vito De Simone Ph.D., a retired Italian professor at Brooklyn College. De Simone described

how his friendship with Viscusi blossomed in the early '90s, beginning at a scholarly conference.

"The association that we created still exists," De Simone said, "We have been sending students from the US to Italy every year."

Later on in his career, Viscusi co-founded the Italian American Writers Association (IAWA) in 1991. As president of the organization, Viscusi worked with fellow academics to create a community for Italian American writers in the greater New York area. Viscusi's goal was to curate a democratic association full of writers at every level; in the process, he enlightened his community, encouraging them to take pride in their identity and to use it as a tool in their writing.

"I was a young writer, I didn't take an interest, none of us did back then really, in other writers of our cultural background," said Annie Lanzillotto, poet, performer, and longtime friend of the late Viscusi. She first met him in the early days of the Italian American Writers Association, where she said Viscusi helped her find her voice.

"Bob took the activism to fight against the stereotypes against Italian Americans as not being literary and started the association," Lanzillotto said. "The idea of creating an IAWA was radical, because 'who was interested in those people?' Many of us had self-shame, ashamed of

PHOTO CREDIT: LUCA FANTANO

our culture."

Viscusi believed not only that Italian American writers were artists and intellectuals; he also believed that there was a community to be formed between them.

"To a large part, because of those meetings and open mics, I met many Italian writers that way," Lanzillotto continued. "Because of his efforts [...] We came to have a writing identity, that didn't exist before Viscusi. He unpacked what it was to be an intellectual, with an Italian identity."

"I didn't think of myself as an ethnic writer [...] Viscusi sparked that for me. He was the Godfather."

As the author of several books, including *Astoria*, which won the American Book Award in 1996, Viscusi became an inspiration to many of those around him.

Viscusi valued literature and his writings made an impact on the lives of many in his field, including De Simone.

"He inspired me to do so many things, I totally depended on him," De Simone said. "He has been part of my life in that way, I have started writing again due to Bob's inspirational power. His work will last."

Viscusi was honored in a memorial service Saturday afternoon in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. In attendance were his immediate family, closest friends, colleagues, and children. In a tearful speech, Robert Viscusi, Jr. reflected on his father's passing.

"I had been preparing for [my father's death] for a very long time," Viscusi Jr. said. "What I was surprised by was how completed my father would be in his life work and his life goals. He was

incredibly successful in the things that he did, because he did them with a certain amount of passion."

Also present was George Cunningham, Professor of Africana Studies at Brooklyn College and colleague of Viscusi, who told the crowd in a eulogy, "Bob invented a better me than I would've been."

"Bob was a part of a movement. He invented a field and was essential to it," Cunningham said. "In short, Bob is irreplaceable."

"I think what remains of him in my mind is good humor, as a person, he was a unique person. He was not above everybody else, but he was among people," said Vito De Simone. "With him, you felt you could talk. He received you without preconceived ideas. He was open and he let you open up, and I think that is, to me, everlasting."

Robert Viscusi is survived by his wife, Ann Viscusi, and his two children, Victoria Viscusi and Robert Viscusi Jr.

"WE [ITALIAN-AMERICANS] CAME TO HAVE A WRITING IDENTITY THAT DIDN'T EXIST BEFORE VISCUSI... HE WAS THE GODFATHER."

- ANNIE LANZILLOTTO, POET/PERFORMER

# The Actor's Life By Jenna Fischer: A Review

By Michaela Arlia  
Staff Writer

Any real fan of *The Office* knows to watch only up until season seven when Michael Scott leaves, because it's only downhill from there. After watching the series from start to finish, how could I not pick up one of the cast members' newest books? It was no surprise to me when actress and producer Jenna Fischer's *The Actor's Life: A Survival Guide* turned out to be a delightful self-help book for aspiring actors in the entertainment industry.

Fischer, who is most known for her role as Pam Beesley in the hit mockumentary, tells her personal tales of how she made it to fame (or almost didn't) in the television and cinematic universe. The book reads more like a memoir or a really long journal entry and allows Fischer to give helpful yet critical advice to those in college seeking a life on stage after their four year education, or to any actor starting out in the business.

If you are looking for ways to get started with or without any background training, it is offered to you through a series of step-by-step chapters. This includes headshots, getting into a union, building a resume, finding and keeping a manager or agent, how to audition, and most importantly, how to deal with rejection.

As I aspire to be an actress myself, I heard about this book from

publicity on Jenna Fischer's Instagram page, and had it in my Amazon wishlist for months before finally getting my hands on it. Once reading it, I decided to take a new approach to acting and allow myself to absorb the words written by Fischer. The points she made were smart and concise, and I believe she offered interesting advice to put a nervous beginner at ease.

Fischer uses her personal stories to connect with her readers, as well as her inside view of the industry, and gives advice on how to cope with the downsides of life in general. She proves that even celebrities are human, and that they go through the same emotions everyone else does.

Aside from her advice, her main argument throughout the book is to continue with your dream and career, even if it knocks you down countless times.

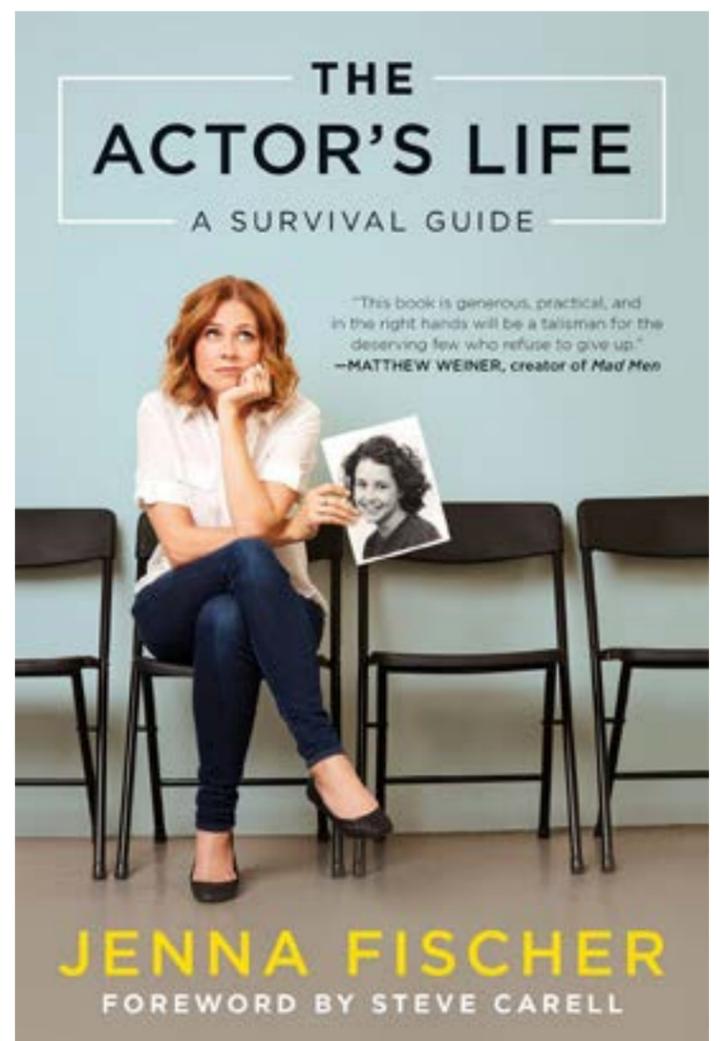
The chapter "Auditioning, Rejection, and How to Persevere" is where she argues this the most. It is probably the best writing and advice I have read about how to deal with the word "no." The quote "we're actors — we're the opposite of people" doesn't hold true in Fischer's eyes. Her advice on what to do if someone in the industry rejects you made me feel better about all the rejections I have ever received. She says to take a personal day to eat a lot and have fun; to celebrate instead of sulk, and keep trying.

Reading this, I thought back on all the times I had ever been turned down. Looking back, it doesn't seem like the end of the world anymore.

Every five to seven pages, Fischer includes a small inspirational quote, from everyone from Carol Burnett to Confucius. One of my favorites listed in the book is a quote by Seneca that reads, "luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." Inspirational quotes may be cheesy, but in this memoir, each quote is carefully picked for this book. The quotes generally relate to the situation being discussed in each point of the book. If you pick the book up solely to read the quotes, you will finish them and most likely have a changed outlook on life and all of its aspects. But you need to finish the book in order to understand the life lessons Fischer provides.

Many acting self-help books exist out there, including my all time favorite, *Talking As Fast As I Can* by Lauren Graham. But the two memoirs have very different styles of writing, humor and advice. While Fischer says be careful, Graham says just go for it and don't look back. Both are very entertaining reads, but Fischer tends to stay on the more overly cautious side with her advice.

Which leads me to what I believe is the only flaw of this. Her advice, though very wise and easy to follow, is too cautious at times. At



many points in the book, she advises the reader to a specific task in the entertainment industry, followed by words of caution. This includes phrases such as "ask first," and "don't overestimate." In the acting world, you can never be too polite, but as an advocate for yourself, I believe there is most definitely room for some pushiness to get what you want.

Pro tip: watch most, if not all of her movies and TV shows before reading. Watching Fischer's films after reading the book pulled the veil from the magic which cinema can create because she gave specific details into how her scenes were constructed. Watching the clips after reading made it hard to believe in the magic of cinema, as the reality behind scene construction was clearer due to the book.

These minor flaws can be overlooked by some readers who are passionate about their craft. I however, could not overlook them. Other than this, Fischer offers a

comforting argument for any actor struggling at the moment who needs a little pick-me-up. Fischer says, "the journey to becoming a working actor [...] is a long and difficult one that requires a lot of hard work and perseverance. But it also requires something more obscure and out of your control: luck," as she speaks of getting back on the horse once you're thrown off of it. It's the main reason you should listen to her argument, and mine as I support her thoughts.

I would recommend this book not only to actors, but to anyone who has a dream they would like to carry out or even someone who is curious to know what the life of a working actor entails. So especially for all you Theatre majors, minors and aspiring actors, pick *The Actor's Life* up and give it a good thorough read. As Fischer says, "the world needs you."

**"The world needs you."  
- Jenna Fischer**

# On The Record: H.E.R.



By Allison Rapp  
*Opinions Editor*

This may be the first week of the spring semester, usually a time for forward steps and future plans, but I can't help feeling reflective to start things off.

Firstly, thank you to everyone who picked up a copy of *The Vanguard*, visited our website, checked out our social media, or even took a second or two to think to themselves, "who the hell are these Vanguard people?" Believe me, we're still trying to figure it out ourselves. On the Record has been a labor of love, an experiment, and something I'm excited about fine-tuning in the coming semester.

I've only been back stateside for a mere ten days, and I miss Glasgow dearly. A few weeks ago when I was taking the train out of London, I noticed a billboard advertisement that prompted the question: "Where do you say you're from? Do you say the name of the town you were born in? The city you moved to? The

place where your job is?" The picture of home can shift — sometimes over and over again — but I think I will always consider Glasgow part of my home.

I'm writing this first column from the very comfortable living room of my new Brooklyn apartment, a space that feels safe, warm, inviting, and the most like a permanent home in a number of years. Those of you with an exceptional memory might remember some of the reporting I did in the past regarding the college residence hall. Though I cannot speak for everyone — my experiences are entirely my own — I can say with confidence that my new home is the preferable place.

And just like home can change, people can too. Normally, I despise the practice of making New Year's resolutions. I have two sides — hyper-organized expert and free spirited hippie — and resolutions don't really fit into either of those. But this year, 2020, seems like a good year

to start digging a little deeper into what I want my goals to be and how I can go about achieving them. More specifically, thinking about who I was a year ago, versus who I am now, versus who I would like to be. That's why this week I listened to H.E.R.'s 2018 album: *I Used to Know Her: The Prelude*, which was nominated for album of the year at the 2020 Grammys.

At the time of writing this, the Grammys are only a few hours away, the results are still unknown, and I don't particularly care.

Let me put it this way: The Grammys, at their best, can shine some especially important spotlights on new artists, artists who are reaching outside the box, and artists who have a deep passion for the music they create. At their worst, things essentially become a popularity contest. Those two sides of the spectrum, and the whole mess of a gray area in between, could be a whole other column.

At the end of the day, it should always be about

the music: What is the artist trying to say? How is the music making us feel?

*I Used to Know Her* was released in two parts over the course of 2018, though the transition from song to song is smooth enough that you'd never know. Gabrielle Wilson is only 22 years old, another thing you'd never know just by hearing the tracks. Using the stage name "H.E.R.," she sings with a voice that sounds much older and wiser.

Her lyrics are mature, touching on topics that most artists take years to pluck up the courage to write, but it's what she says between takes that stands out. During "Good to Me," Wilson can be heard talking to presumably her producer or a musician in the room. She begins to explain the meaning behind her words:

"So I think it's kind of like the other perspective of not, like  
Coming from the perspective of a woman who's with a man that's no good

But it's a man that is good to me.

But you have to be good to me when I'm not around  
And you have to think of who you really want to be."

*I Used to Know Her* is a pure, honest R&B record, and, as they say, they don't make them like that anymore. These records emphasize the serious value of rhythm, and prove that the only people who truly, unequivocally have a handle on rhythm are jazz players and R&B singers. Having a good vocal range and a clear tone is only half the battle.

Making it in the modern industry as a young artist has always been challenging. It's especially challenging if you're a young black woman. The barriers that stand in the way are daunting, but Wilson seems determined, focused, and only just beginning to tap into her talent.

# “Manhattan Beach”: A Review

By Michael Castaneda  
*Columnist*

Reading over winter break was less than I had hoped. One book I read was *Manhattan Beach* by Jennifer Egan. You might have seen this book featured in the New York City subway book club a couple of years ago. It was also on the New York Times' 100 Notable Books of 2017.

The book is long -- 431 pages. I go to Brooklyn College, for Pete's sake.

But the heroine is a Brooklyn College student, and Flatbush Avenue is featured prominently. The book knows Brooklyn well and if you're from the area, you'll recognize many locations.

Despite its success, I didn't like the book all that much. For one thing, there are too many characters and deep descriptions of scenes -- carefully painted in exquisite detail. You

feel like you're in 1940s Brooklyn. But at the same time the pictures are being painted, nothing is happening with the main story for pages upon pages.. The plot doesn't move and the characters don't develop.

Many of the plot points rely on common movie motifs. You have the “buddy” film where two guys initially hate each other but then learn to get along as they work towards a shared goal. Then you have the gangster that goes down because he tries to get clean. Towards the end you get a grand sea adventure. These took away something from the parts of the book that I did enjoy.

The start of the book, which may be its best part, is not unlike “A Tree Grows in Brooklyn.” Anna Kerrigan, the main character, resembles Francie Nolan. Both are children of Irish immigrants in the early part of the 20th century

living in a particular corner of Brooklyn, and they both lose their fathers at an early age. In addition, both live in an early 20th century ethnic (Jewish, Irish, Polish, Italian) subculture of Brooklyn.

Our next main character, Dexter Styles, is, of course, stylish, smart, and relatable. He climbs high in the underworld of the mob. He might have excelled in the outer world had he not been born into this 20th century ethnic group.

As the heavy-handed cliches appear in the story, you start to doubt if these people are great characters or just copies of great characters hoping to win you over. Next stop is a movie, that's where the real money is, right?

Why does this book work? What keeps one from reading this and not throwing it on the ground screaming “I'm an adult!”? Is it too far to call it prosaic garbage?

It's the story of Anna and Dexter that works. Anna, besides being a Brooklyn College student, is a diver in the Brooklyn Naval yards during World War II -- the first ever. Her journey is an exciting one. Battling sexism, she perseveres by strength, fortitude, and grit.

Dexter is also facing his own conflicts. A gangster by profession, but a husband at home. He doesn't fit in, but he survives by being clever.

When these two characters collide, the book is electric., though it's a shame it spends too much time on characters of little importance, and not enough time on the ones that truly matter.

This may not be the greatest novel ever written, but it did satisfy my tastes. It took me out of my world and into the world of the characters, whom I came to care about. Towards the end, finishing the book



became my top priority with my free time. Best of all, it gave me an insight on how people think and react in different situations. A New York Times was an article once discussed the reading habits of top CEOs -- a surprising number read fiction. Their reasoning? It helped them to navigate through unexpected situations. So much can be learned through the characters of a book.

# I Know More Than I Can Say Installation

By Paola Sacerdote  
*Staff Writer*

Take a trip down memory lane to a time of an unforgettable situation. With his new art installation “I Know More Than I Can Say,” artist Alberto Marcos Bursztyn invites everyone to unpack the suitcase of those stored memories, write words you wish you could have said but didn't, or simply just stand and observe the situation, refreshing your thoughts more and more of that moment.

Through “I Know More Than I Can Say,” which is now open in the lower level of BC's library, Bursztyn explores his memories as a young Jewish teenager from Argentina migrating to New York. The installation contains a collection of items related to his migration.

“There is a wide variety of things here,” Bursztyn explained. “Most of them are old, and most of them

are items that associate with home, or moving, or being in an unstable or unclear place.”

Some of the items are covered with bed sheets. This comes from a memory that's remained with Bursztyn of his mother covering their old furniture with bed sheets, so they would be free of dust for the next owners. The installation also includes a special lullaby “Arrorro mi niño” from his childhood memories.

“Many of these things that are sort of traces of early experience before we have language, and it led me to think about my own experiences growing up and being in a place where a lot of things were not said because of the military dictatorship,” said Bursztyn. “Things were under wraps, and you know what's going on, but you don't talk about it.”

In moving to America, he felt between places, stuck between a shrouded

familiar past and a new unsettling beginning in New York. In search of a brighter future, Bursztyn enrolled as a student at Brooklyn College, and later achieved a PhD in psychology at Columbia University. Since then, he's become a child psychologist, author, a psychology professor at Brooklyn College, and a Brooklyn-based artist expressing psychological meanings through his artwork.

Students will have the opportunity to meet the artist himself for the grand opening of “I Know More Than I Can Say” during the third week of this February. Another artwork of Bursztyn's, “In My Grandma's Workshop,” has been on display outside the library's Woody Tanger Auditorium since 2016; “I Know More Than I Can Say” is the first large-scale installation in the library basement.

“I was so happy to occupy



The installation in the Brooklyn College Library./ Paola Sacerdote

this space [that] has never had an artistic installation and to be the first one at the library to do something here,” said Bursztyn. “And I hope that in the future, it would become a space for more art as well.”

Bursztyn wants to connect to his audience and hear their thoughts on his installation. He has left a marble notebook on a small table for people to leave comments, either anonymously or leaving personal information, so he can write an e-mail reply.

“I attempt to create

an environment that is evocative of the things I want to communicate, but also a place for anybody who sees it to access experiences, memories, thoughts that might in some way enrich their lives,” Bursztyn explained. “Sometimes the artist is not even aware of the extent to which the art reflects his or her self.”

More of Alberto Marcos Bursztyn's work can be viewed on his website, [www.albertobursztyn.com](http://www.albertobursztyn.com), and on Instagram @ [albertomarcosbursztyn](https://www.instagram.com/albertomarcosbursztyn).

# NBA Legend Kobe Bryant Dead at 41

By Conrad Hoyt  
Sports Editor

We mourn the death today of Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna “Gigi” Bryant, and seven others, following a catastrophic helicopter crash in Calabasas, California, on Sunday, January 26. He was 41-years old.

Kobe Bryant was a five-time NBA champion, two-time NBA Finals MVP, and undisputed top-10 player of all time in the sport of basketball. Kobe also won league MVP for the 2008 season. His single game record of 81 points is still the second most of all time.

Kobe’s legacy stretches across multiple generations, through people of different backgrounds, countries of residence, and circumstances. Not everyone was a fan of Kobe, but all respected him, for when he showed up on your television screen, you could be absolutely certain he was going to give his all.

Kobe embodied many characteristics we all hope to achieve: resilience, courageousness, dedication, and adaptability. After his 60-point final game of his career, Kobe retired, and many people rightfully wondered how such an obsessor of basketball



Kobe Bryant and Gianna Bryant./ Getty Images

would handle stepping away from the game. Instead, Kobe’s retirement went seamlessly. He wrote a letter to the Players Tribune, which became the animated short film “Dear Basketball,” which won an Oscar in 2018.

Kobe’s time away from the game also allowed him to spend more time with family, especially with his daughter Gianna, or “Gigi”, a big fan of basketball, who Kobe says was the reason he began watching basketball again. Throughout this season, Kobe and Gigi were often enough spotted courtside discussing the game, as Kobe gave his daughter a breakdown of what and why certain things were happening, with one clip of this

instance going viral in the past few weeks. We weep for the loss of 13-year-old Gigi, a girl Kobe said “for sure” wanted to play in the WNBA, a girl who had such a bright future in front of her, and whose personality was so unabashedly like her father.

We also weep for the other victims of the crash, including longtime college baseball coach John Altobelli, his wife Keri and their daughter, Alyssa. If it is any consolation, we can rest assured Kobe and John were there for their families in their final seconds, and their love was unmistakable and so powerful it transcends life and death.

Kobe Bryant leaves behind a legacy with so much

depth it is hard to gather it all. Gen X’ers, Millennials, and Gen Z’ers alike all threw their crumpled-up paper in the garbage can and yelled out “Kobe.” Nearly everyone knows what the mamba mentality is, which is, among other things, to be fearless in the face of adversity.

The sports world and the world itself will not be the same after this devastating event. The wounds left behind will take time to heal, if they ever will, and even for the majority of us who never met Kobe, he had an immense impact on our lives, and that cannot be overstated.

In the hours following his death, support poured in from across the sports world. In all eight of the

NBA games played Sunday, each team began the game with either a 24-second shot clock violation, or an 8-second backcourt violation in honor of the two numbers Bryant wore over his career with the LA Lakers.

We grieve and send love to Kobe’s wife Vanessa Bryant, his surviving daughters, the Altobelli family, and the families of the other fallen passengers. If there is anything left to do now, it is to send love into the world at a time that needs so much of it. That and to always adopt the “mamba mentality” in anything we set out to do; that is what Kobe would have wanted.

## Low Qui Savage: An Introduction

By Quiara Vasquez  
Editor-in-Chief

Hey there, reader. I hope you’re enjoying our first issue of 2020, which, in addition to being quite good, marks an alarming personal milestone. And no, I don’t mean that this is the thirteenth issue of Vanguard, although that is a very spooky number.

No, what’s truly scary is that with this issue, I begin my fifth year as a student journo here at BC. It’s been a pretty dramatic lustrum on the national stage, to be sure, but BC’s been rocked by scandal too these last

five years. I’ve covered marches and protests; interviewed politicians and personal heroes; bore witness to the meteoric rise and fall of YPA; and, perhaps most importantly, got away with putting a literal vagina on the front cover of Kingsman.

Over the past five years I’ve evolved as a reporter, from a timid cub to a grizzled veteran of the CUNY news beat. Now, with just four months left in my academic career, it’s time to move on to the final stage of any journalist’s life cycle: washed-up opinions columnist.

I know what some of you

are wondering - “Quiara, don’t you have any shred of self-respect?” (No, but continue.) “Why are you wasting your time and talent peddling hot takes in the most worthless sector of the news biz?” Honestly, I share your disdain. As my good frenemy Dani Kogan over at WBCR likes to say, opinions are the lowest form of news. And they take the oxygen out of the room (and steal column inches) from important reporting. My gears are thoroughly ground every time Twitter characterizes The New York Times not as a source of vital local news coverage but as a vessel

for Bret Stephens word-vomit. (If ever there was a man deserving of those initials...)

So why spend your last semester ever writing an opinions column? Well, I’ve had a lot of time to think about Brooklyn College during my time here, and I’ve had literal years to formulate my opinions on some of the most pressing subjects on campus - progressive politics, \$7K or Strike, tenure troubles, and everything in between. And I’ve found that my perspective from these issues often differs from the mainstream. Which sounds weird, given that

Vanguard is about as mainstream a news source as you can get on this campus, but up until now I’ve tried to avoid using my platform to air my personal opinions. Now that my time with Vanguard is coming to an end, though, and I have a staff I trust to take this paper into the future, I feel like I can finally truly express how I feel about this fine educational institution, in the form of some nonchalant yet truly incendiary hot takes.

Because I truly am... Low Qui Savage.

# Mens' and Womens' Basketball Winter Breakdown

By Conrad Hoyt  
Sports Editor

Brooklyn College women's and men's basketball teams are both off to hot starts in 2020, with the women's team sitting at 6-2 in the month of January, and the men's team compiling a record of 7-2 so far in the same month.

The women's team sits at 12-5 overall, and have won their last four games in blowout fashion (78-47, 90-43, 84-60, 75-41), and all four of those blowouts came against CUNYAC foes. Brooklyn defeated Baruch College, City College, John Jay College, and York College by a combined score of 327-191.

In conference play, the Bulldogs are 7-0 and sit firmly in first place in the standings. They are outscoring their opponents 74.1 to 60.5 on the year, a plus 13.6 margin. The Bulldogs are also outrebounding opponents by 8.3 per game, 784 to 643 in total.

Despite some disappointing losses to non-conference teams, the Bulldogs have been pretty-close-to dominant



Brooklyn College Bulldogs playing against Baruch College. / Damion Reid

so far this season. The team is also leading opponents in overall assists 295 to 216, a testament to the team "making the extra pass," an important aspect of their offense and a quality of the team that Head Coach Alex Lang told the Vanguard back in December.

Junior forward Chanel Jemmott, senior guard Taylor George, and freshman guard Ericka James are leading the way for the Bulldogs, averaging 17.3, 13.7, and 10.6 points per game, respectively.

The men's basketball team sits at 8-9 overall,

which is especially impressive considering they started the season going 0-4 and losing seven of their first eight. They have now won five of their last six. The new year has been kind to the team, and are currently sitting at 5-2 in CUNYAC play and fourth in the standings.

Rebounding has been a consistent issue for the men's team all season. Over the course of the season, they are being out-rebounded 731 to 614 overall, and 43 to 36.1 per game. Still, the team's high-volume of 3-point shots (492 total compared to 321 for

opponents, and 9.7 to 6.4 per game) has been pretty consistent and they are shooting 34 percent on the season, on par with their opponents.

The men's team is also not beating themselves. Their 239 total turnovers this season are far fewer than their opponents' 336, and a mark of 14.1 per game compared to their opponents' 19.8. Staying buttoned-up and keeping control of the ball has been a way for the Bulldogs to offset their horrid rebounding numbers.

The Bulldogs are led by senior guard Michael Tesoriero, junior guard

Noah Shy, and senior guard Jordan Wright, averaging 12.1, 11.6, and 10.3 points per game, respectively. The reliance on the Bulldogs guard play is clear in their games and in turn, their numbers.

The month of January has been kind to both the men's and women's teams. Their improvement from the early part of the season is impressive. Both teams will look to ride their hot streak into the final chapter of the season and keep their momentum running before the playoffs.



Brooklyn College Bulldogs playing against John Jay. / Damion Reid