

FALL 2021/WINTER 2022

BARUCH

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

CIVNER = FIELD PLAZA

Welcome Back!

STUDENTS RETURN TO A TRANSFORMED CAMPUS

- + REMARKABLE RANKINGS
- + INNOVATIVE FACULTY RESEARCH



MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT

Dear Baruch Alumni,

As I begin the second year of my Baruch presidency, I want to share with you my excitement and optimism for the College's future. Despite the upheaval of the pandemic, Baruch not only moved forward but emerged stronger than ever before.

Emerging Stronger in the New Academic Year

With careful planning and a lot of hard work, we overcame significant logistical as well as health and safety challenges and successfully reopened the campus in August. After 18 months of distance learning and remote work, I was energized to meet—finally—so many Bearcats in person, including members of the Class of 2025, more than 2,600 first-year students. At a time when many colleges and universities struggle with dwindling enrollments, Baruch experienced record numbers of applicants, and enrollment increased another 1 percent this year following a 7 percent increase last year. Only a small number of top-tier institutions around the country enjoyed a similar surge in demand. Unequivocally, Baruch's distinctive value proposition of delivering stellar academics at an accessible cost—now enhanced by ever more flexible modalities—is gaining traction and earning admiration.

Differentiation and Reputation

Baruch differentiates itself with a unique amalgam of excellence and accessibility—a combination increasingly recognized as the way forward for higher education. *Forbes* recently widened its rankings criteria to consider “schools serving as true engines of the American Dream.” With this new emphasis, Baruch jumped 110 positions on the “America's Best Colleges” ranking, placing 64th nationally. Not by coincidence, the *Wall Street Journal Times Higher Education* ranked Baruch the #2 best value college in the U.S.

And in a shout-out to you, our alumni: The Princeton Review, in its 2022 *Best 387 Colleges*, identified Baruch as having one of the “Top 20 Best Alumni Networks” in the nation among public institutions.

Our Campus Transformation

I was honored and excited to host two ribbon-cutting ceremonies this year—both commemorating major milestones in our campus transformation. In January,

more than 350 friends and champions of Baruch came together virtually to celebrate the completion of Phase 1a of the renovation of our historic Lawrence and Eris Field Building at 17 Lexington Avenue. And on October 13, I was thrilled to host my first major, in-person event at Baruch: the dedication of the Clivner=Field Plaza, which transformed a city thoroughfare into a beautiful outdoor space. We also cheered the opening of the Allen G. and Mary E. Aaronson Student Center located in the historic Madison Square Post Office.

After extensive national searches, I am proud to report that we recruited two extraordinary talents to my leadership team: Linda Essig, MFA, PhD, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Elliott Dawes, JD, LLM, Executive Chief Diversity Officer. Linda and Elliott are recognized national leaders in their areas of expertise—and most importantly, each brings a deep conviction and commitment to the College's mission.

Help Your Alma Mater Shine!

At the Clivner=Field Plaza dedication, I remarked on the more than 1,400 engraved pavers donated by our alumni: Being surrounded by so much gratitude—and so many stories of personal success—reminds all of us that we are part of something that is larger than ourselves. Indeed, our renowned alumni network is integral to the Baruch experience and to our outlook as a strong and lasting community.

There are so many ways you can help your alma mater shine. Share your experiences with students—as mentors, internship advisors, and prospective employers. Hiring Baruch alumni is a great way to give back (see our #HireBaruch ad on the back cover). Contribute to our Annual Fund, “Invest in Us.”

Every month, I write a blog where I share my big-picture thinking, personal experiences, and research across domains as it relates to higher education and society at large. As alumni living around the world, you have invaluable perspectives that could inform our path forward. Please join the conversation at presidentblog.baruch.cuny.edu.

Thank you for your partnership and support as we move Baruch forward in this exciting new era.

Sincerely,
S. DAVID WU
President, Baruch College




President Wu, headshot (opposite) and Plaza photo (above) by Elena Olivo; Days of Welcome photo (opposite) by Mayreni Polanco; Birdsell photo by Jerry Speier

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Baruch COLLEGE | CU NY

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FALL 2021/WINTER 2022

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Appointments Strengthen Baruch's Strategic Vision

Two appointments to Baruch's senior leadership team this summer reinforced the College's continuing commitment to fostering academic excellence and accessibility in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

Linda Essig, MFA, PhD, was named provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, with responsibility for all academic, research, and creative work of the College. Elliott Dawes, JD, LLM, was appointed executive chief diversity officer, tasked with leading Baruch's Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives and serving as the College's Title IX coordinator, Section 504/ADA coordinator, and sexual harassment prevention coordinator.

Dr. Essig's impressive track record encompasses more than three decades as a faculty member and administrator at major public institutions, including the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Arizona State University, and, most recently, California State University, Los Angeles, where she was dean of the College of Arts & Letters. With a background in professional theater design in addition to expertise in cultural entrepreneurship and public administration and policy, she will also hold a tenure position in Baruch's Weissman School of Arts and Sciences.

Mr. Dawes has deep and varied experience in education, civil rights litigation, and higher education administration. Most recently chief diversity officer for institutional equity and inclusion at SUNY Empire State College, he was previously university director of The City University of New York Black Male Initiative, assistant dean for multicultural affairs at the Hofstra University School of Law, and an associate professor in the Department of African American



"Baruch students achieve not despite but because of their diverse backgrounds as first-generation students, immigrants, or English-language learners," says new Provost Linda Essig, MFA, PhD (left). She joined Baruch's senior leadership this summer along with Elliott Dawes, JD, LLM, who was appointed executive chief diversity officer.

Studies at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNY. Prior to his career in education, he was a litigation associate at a large law firm and later served as a trial attorney in the Educational Opportunities Litigation Section, Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

"I am delighted to welcome both Linda and Elliott to the Baruch community," says President S. David Wu, PhD. "They join us at a pivotal moment as we emerge from the pandemic and as our nation continues to grapple with the deep-rooted issues of equality, racial justice, and social justice. I know that with their guidance, Baruch will continue to serve as a national model for academic excellence, access, and social mobility." —SALLY FAY

More High Marks for Baruch

Baruch College continues to distinguish itself with recent rankings and national accolades—and even the College's alumni network is getting in on the act.

The Princeton Review's *The Best 387 Colleges* guidebook for 2022 highlighted Baruch on two "Top 20" lists, ranking the College #19 in Best Alumni Networks (Public Schools) and #15 Best Value College. The former ranking, based on students' ratings of alumni activity and visibility on campus, is indicative of the crucial role the Baruch alumni network plays in students' college experience.

"We are delighted to see Baruch's alumni network recognized in such a significant way," said Janet B. Rossbach, Baruch's director of alumni relations and volunteer engagement. "Many of the other colleges on the list—like Penn State, Virginia Tech, and UCLA—have longstanding alumni traditions, so for Baruch

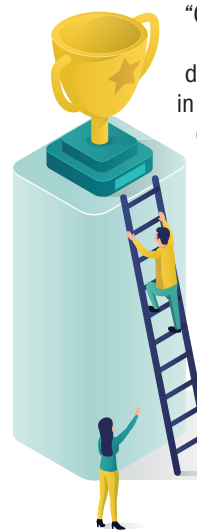
to be among them speaks volumes. Our graduates consistently serve as mentors, speak at events, and volunteer to help the next generation of students." The Princeton Review also featured Baruch among its "Top 50 Value Colleges," "Best Northeastern," and "Great College City" lists.

Additionally, an article on diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education in *Equal Opportunity* magazine listed Baruch among the top 20 universities that offer "a diverse curriculum, student base, faculty, and staff and foster a diverse and inclusive learning environment." The reader-based survey results echo

the College's impressive showing in a recent *Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education* ranking of nearly 800 colleges, which listed Baruch as the #5 college for diversity in the Northeast and #13 nationally.

Baruch also garnered the #2 spot in *U.S. News & World Report's* latest Best Colleges ranking of Top Performers on Social Mobility, joining four other CUNY schools among the top 10. And *Forbes* ranked Baruch #64 out of 600 schools nationwide—a 110-spot jump from last year.

"These rankings reflect the distinctive value proposition Baruch College offers all its students," says President S. David Wu, PhD. "We provide a truly transformational education, at scale, through nationally acclaimed academic programs, distinguished faculty, and extensive student support services that attend to the personal and career needs of our students." —SALLY FAY



New Horizons

Marxe Dean David Birdsell Retires

In July, David Birdsell—dean of Baruch's Austin W. Marxe School of Public and International Affairs—retired after 35 years of service to Baruch. Birdsell took over the helm as dean in 2006 and, under his leadership, the Marxe School roughly doubled in size, established a Master of International Affairs degree, steadily climbed in rankings, and attracted the largest gift in Baruch history: \$30 million from Austin W. Marxe ('65, LHD-Hon. '18) in 2016 to name the school.

"I want to take this opportunity not to say goodbye, because I hope we'll see one another often in the future, but to say thank you," wrote Birdsell in a farewell email to alumni. "You have all given me more than I ever could have dreamed."

In the fall, Birdsell was appointed provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Kean University in New Jersey—an opportunity for which he says Baruch prepared him well. "I will bring to this new assignment all that I have learned from my colleagues, my students, and the wonderful alumni of this program," he wrote.

Longtime Marxe faculty member and administrator Nancy Aries, PhD, accepted a one-year appointment as interim dean of the Marxe School as the College embarks on a national search for a permanent Marxe Dean. "This is a critical moment in public affairs education, and the Marxe School is primed to address it," says Aries. "We educate the leaders society needs to successfully meet the challenges of equity and sustainability in a post-Covid world."

Interim Dean Aries brings with her a wealth of experience. She previously served as CUNY's interim university dean for undergraduate education, director of the Baruch Honors Program, the Marxe School's executive director of academic programs, and director of its Higher Education Administration program.

—JASON M. EPSTEIN



To celebrate Dean Birdsell's impact on Baruch, the Advisory Board of the Marxe School created the David Birdsell Endowed Scholarship, which will provide financial support to talented students of the Marxe School for years to come. Learn more at tinyurl.com/honorbirdsell.

Contest Captures Students' Covid Experience

In March, Baruch's Department of Journalism and the Writing Professions launched an essay contest for undergraduate students challenging them to reflect on their personal experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. Called "The COVID Diaries Essay Contest," the competition was created by David Shulman ('64)—a generous alumnus and a senior economist emeritus at UCLA's Anderson Forecast—and received three dozen entries.

Shulman was inspired to create the contest after reading *The World According to Fannie Davis: My Mother's Life in the Detroit Numbers*, the captivating memoir by Baruch Professor Bridgett Davis. Davis herself ended up judging the contest along with Assistant Professor Gisele Regatao, with senior Rosa Guevara ultimately taking home the top prize. In her winning essay, "La Casa de Cupones (The House of Stamps)," she writes about her family receiving dirty looks at the supermarket for using food stamps and examines unfulfilled promises of the American Dream. "The pandemic ruined us," she wrote. It "helped us starve, helped us lie, helped us be ashamed."

Taken as a whole, the essay submissions paint a vivid and varied picture of Baruch students' lives during the pandemic—at times harsh and unflinching, including stories of racism, the trauma of isolation, and alienation from friends and family.

Shulman's family foundation provided prize money for the top three winners, and Davis funded three honorable mention prizes in her mother's honor. Baruch's student-run magazine, *Dollars & Sense*, published all of the winning essays.

"I'm so pleased after reading these essays," Shulman said at an online celebration for the winners. "This is what I wanted to see—what the student experience was during the very tragic and crazy and horrible time we've all been going through."

Shulman plans to fund another writing contest next year, adding to what Davis describes as his "long and deep history of making a positive impact" at Baruch. In addition to funding the essay competition, Shulman gives back to the College by mentoring students and serving as managing director of Baruch's Financial Leadership Program.

—BETH HARPAZ



◀ Read the winning essays:
1- Open the camera on your mobile phone.
2- Scan this QR code and tap the pop-up link on your screen.



Emissary of Entrepreneurship

Ever since alumnus Carlos Dos Santos (EMBA '99) graduated from Baruch's Zicklin School of Business, he has been working to build relationships between his alma mater and his native country, Mozambique, which since 2016 he has represented as ambassador to the United States and Canada.

Now that collaborative spirit has borne its first fruits: This fall, the business school of Lúrio University in northern Mozambique offered its faculty and selected students a free, three-week webinar series on entrepreneurship, taught by Zicklin School professors from the Lawrence N. Field Center for Entrepreneurship.

The series opened with a lecture on academic and practical perspectives on entrepreneurship, delivered by Scott Newbert, PhD, academic director of the Field Center and a professor in the Narendra Paul Loomba Department of Management. Subsequent sessions covered brainstorming small business ideas, creating an operational plan, budgeting, negotiation, and other topics.

The ultimate aim is to leverage the Field Center's experience teaching, coaching, and advising entrepreneurs to encourage entrepreneurship in an underdeveloped region of Mozambique, explains Joseph Onochie, PhD, Zicklin's executive director for executive education, who was instrumental in building the partnership between the two universities. Onochie, an associate professor of finance who taught Dos Santos

while the latter was studying at Baruch, has maintained a 20-year-plus friendship with the ambassador.

"Carlos has always been a champion of education for his people," Onochie says. "For years we've been discussing ways to build relationships between Zicklin and institutions in Mozambique." Those discussions finally culminated in the current partnership after Dos Santos spoke to Baruch alumni at a virtual event organized by the Office of Alumni Relations and Volunteer Engagement.

"At Zicklin, I got a great education from a prestigious institution of higher learning," Dos Santos says. "I wanted to share the kind of knowledge I received with the people of my country."

—SARA J. WELCH

Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos (EMBA '99) has stayed in touch with his alma mater over the years, frequently participating in alumni events in New York and Washington, DC.



Weissman Professors Pursue Answers to Cosmic Questions

The Big Bang is a big deal in the world of theoretical physics, but it's what came immediately after that intrigues Jamal Jililian-Marian, PhD, and Adrian Dumitru, PhD. The two professors in the Department of Natural Sciences at Baruch's Weissman School of Arts and Sciences were recently awarded a \$400,000 grant from the United States Department of Energy (DOE) to advance understanding of the conditions that may have existed in the early history of the universe, a few microseconds after the Big Bang.

"The goal of researching the fundamental laws of nature is to better understand the universe we live in," Dumitru says.

The two-year grant, funded by the DOE's Nuclear Physics Program, will also help support the work of two graduate students. The funding is a continuation of a previous grant in support of their research, whose current working title is "High-Energy Quantum Chromodynamics in Heavy-Ion Collisions." So far, the pair have received a total of about \$1.75 million in funding from the DOE in furtherance of their work.

Professors Dumitru and Jililian-Marian are long-time colleagues at Baruch, having joined the faculty in 2008 and 2006, respectively. As theoretical physicists, they develop models and theories to interpret experimental data obtained from premier particle accelerators, including the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland and the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island, New York. These specialized research sites can help physicists simulate and even recreate certain events that occurred in the early universe.

Ultimately, Dumitru and Jililian-Marian hope to make predictions for the outcome of future experiments that will take place at the Electron-Ion Collider, a new, unique facility currently approved for development at the Brookhaven National Lab. Their efforts will contribute to a better understanding of the extreme limits of quantum chromodynamics and the structure and behavior of subatomic particles at high energies, clarifying the picture of how the universe is put together and adding to the knowledge of the properties and potential of energy sources.

—SALLY FAY

Research from Weissman Professors Jamal Jililian-Marian, PhD, and Adrian Dumitru, PhD, will give insight into the properties of the matter that existed less than one microsecond after the Big Bang. Says Jililian-Marian: "This will help us better understand the extreme limits of quantum chromodynamics, which are largely unexplored."



Shaping the Field of Play

Baruch Professors Make Their Mark in Sports

Score one for Baruch faculty: a number of professors garnered recent recognition for their research pertaining to the world of sports.

Marc Edelman, JD, MEd, MA, a professor of law at the Zicklin School of Business and sports ethics director of the Robert Zicklin Center for Corporate Integrity, was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholarship for the Fall 2021 semester to study and conduct research at the University of Canberra, Australia. The scholarship will enable him to explore how Australia regulates commercial sports, in particular financial opportunities for young athletes, as compared to U.S. governance in that area.

Professor Edelman's inspiration for his research is his belief that the American college sports system warrants a fundamental change in light of underlying issues of race and class inherent to sports labor relations, as well as issues of free and fair markets. He recently co-authored an article exploring the implications of resuming intercollegiate sports in the midst of a pandemic from a legal, medical, and ethical perspective.

"It is hard to convince legislators that change is viable without presenting evidence of a more equitable alternative," says Edelman. "Thus, my goal is to

understand how what we see in America compares to other places around the world, most specifically Australia."

Meanwhile, a team of psychology professors in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences has been making a major impact on the NFL. Professors Harold Goldstein, PhD, and Charles Scherbaum, PhD, and Assistant Professor Elliott Larson, PhD, received the 2021 M. Scott Myers Award for Applied Research in the Workplace from the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, in recognition of their NFL Player Assessment Test (PAT).

The NFL-PAT is a customized test designed to predict player performance in a manner that treats players from diverse backgrounds fairly and incorporates diversity, equity, and inclusion interests into selection decisions. The Baruch professors and their consulting team, Siena Consulting, have refined the test annually since its implementation in 2013, integrating the most recent findings in the field of industrial and organizational psychology.

—SALLY FAY



BEARCATS ARE BACK!

After a 15-month hiatus as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, all of Baruch's fall sports teams resumed competition in September. Seen above: Senior Cormac Foley charges across the pitch in a game against NYU earlier this season.



A Campus Transformed

BARUCH WELCOMES STUDENTS BACK WITH MAJOR RENOVATIONS

Baruch President S. David Wu celebrated the ceremonial opening of the 25th Street Clivner=Field Plaza alongside students, donors, and government officials.

When campus reopened for hybrid learning in the Fall 2021 semester, students, faculty, and staff returned to a transformed space: three major renovation projects had been completed since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, including the lobby and elevators of the Lawrence and Eris Field Building (known to scores of alumni as “17 Lex”), the opening of the Allen G. and Mary E. Aaronson Student Center, and Clivner=Field Plaza on 25th Street.

“This is a landmark moment in the history of Baruch,” said President S. David Wu at a ceremonial ribbon-cutting of the Clivner=Field Plaza in October. “It represents the future and audacity of Baruch College. Ours is an institution that is willing to dream big, work hard, meet challenges head-on, and go the extra mile to create transformative change.”

But the campus enhancements are much more than just cosmetic. Learn about each of these completed projects and see how all three are game changers for the student experience.



Top: A look at the new lobby of the Field Building at 17 Lexington Avenue, complete with card-swiping turnstiles and modernized elevators. Bottom: The building's new façade lets in natural light from Lexington Avenue.

EXTREME MAKEOVER: 17 LEX EDITION

Alumni will likely do a double take when they see the new lobby of the Field Building at 17 Lexington Avenue, often considered the historic hub and sentimental heart of Baruch College. The construction project represents the *first* significant renovation of the building since it opened its doors in 1929 as the City College of New York (the building sits on the original site of the 1847 Free Academy, a precursor to CUNY).

Among the sleek new lobby's features: large, open windows letting in natural light from Lexington Avenue; card-swiping turnstiles at the entryway with an enhanced security desk; an accessibility ramp; and upgraded electrical capacity that allows all six modernized elevators to run seamlessly at all times.

Construction began in 2017, and this completed phase represents only the first part of a multiphase project that aims to ultimately make the building sustainable, with a LEED Silver designation from the U.S. Green Building Council.

For Jim Kaznosky, director of environmental health and safety in Baruch's Office of Campus Facilities and Operations, the completed project represents a major achievement for the College—and a major upgrade for students and faculty.

“Completing a construction project of this size was difficult, as the building was occupied during this time,” he says. “The addition of these higher-speed elevators has proven to be very beneficial to the College community.”

For generations of Baruch alumni, this renovation will come as a welcome—and breathtaking—sight. At one point in Baruch's history, virtually every activity, academic and extracurricular, took place under the Field Building's roof, so nearly all of Baruch's graduates have fond recollections of the building—and maybe a not-so-fond memory or two of being stuck in an elevator while rushing to class.

Photos by Elena Olivo



A HUB FOR STUDENT LIFE

Further enhancing the student experience is the new Allen G. and Mary E. Aaronson Student Center, which opened its doors for the start of the Fall 2021 semester. The facility, just shy of 5,000 square feet in size, is located in leased space in the U.S. Post Office's historic building on 23rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues. Students access the Aaronson Center on the south side of 24th Street, across from the main Newman Vertical Campus entrance.

The new student center was made possible by a generous gift from the late Allen G. Aaronson ('48) and his wife, Mary. As an active student with leadership roles on the Interclub Board and Student Council, the alumnus was determined to support student life. The new space offers a wide range of mixed-use seating, as well as three private breakout rooms.

“The Student Center will serve as a student lounge and is a space designed with student comfort in mind,” says Damali Tolson, Baruch's director of Student Life. She says that student engagement has grown tremendously on campus during her years working at the College, and she is excited and hopeful that the new space will deliver an additional area for students to make connections.

“We have found ways to provide engagement opportunities for *all* students, even those with limited time



The Aaronson Student Center offers students a comfortable place to gather, study, and socialize.

to commit,” she adds. “This space will be open to all students and give them an opportunity to connect with each other and truly build community.”

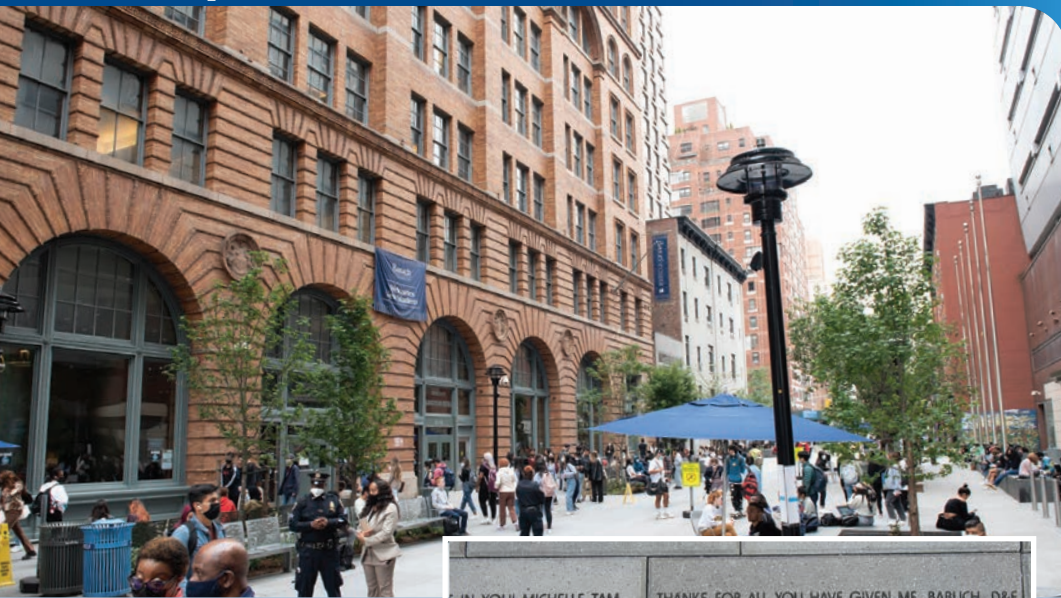
NEW DIRECTIONS FOR GROWTH

Perhaps the most eye-catching and transformative renovation was the completion of the Clivner=Field Plaza at 25th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues, which provides a much-needed open green space for the enjoyment of Baruch's campus community, neighbors, and all New Yorkers.

At its ceremonial ribbon-cutting ceremony in October, government leaders, CUNY officials, and donors celebrated the project's completion—nearly a decade after it was first proposed—and hailed it as an ideal example of a public-private partnership.

“Creating a campus at Baruch seemed like a great idea—a dream—but it hadn't been done in 100 years!” said Daniel Clivner ('85), after whom the plaza is named along with the late Lawrence N. Field ('52, LHD-Hon. '04).





Top: In the span of a decade, 25th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues was closed off to vehicular traffic and transformed into the beautiful Clivner=Field Plaza. **Right:** Engraved paver stones, purchased by alumni and friends, helped to fund the project.



"More than the street itself," Clivner continued, "it represents for me living proof that with the support and inspiration of others—and the lessons being learned in the surrounding buildings—you too can turn great ideas into reality."

The Clivner=Field Plaza is a game changer for the Baruch campus, providing a public green space in a neighborhood with one of the lowest percentages of pedestrian space in the city. It includes nearly 180 square yards of planting comprising 15 newly planted trees. It is also designed to function as a connective space and hub for student life, with 21 new benches, 15 free-standing granite seats, and 583 feet of granite seat walls and steps.

In addition, the plaza features 1,442 engraved pavers purchased to help fund the project. "We are so grateful to the many trustees, alumni, and friends who supported this project, through their generous gifts and purchase of pavers

and benches," says Baruch College Fund (BCF) President Helen J. Mills. Led by the BCF, the alumni and donor community ultimately raised \$3.3 million for the plaza.

"I am ecstatic to honor the vision of my late father to ensure that Baruch College students will always enjoy the opportunity to achieve their dreams and aspirations," says Lisa Field, one of Lawrence Field's daughters. "He would be so pleased knowing that Baruch, the college that gives so much to so many, has been gifted something it never had in its entire history...a place for students to commune, study, and socialize in the fresh air."

As Clivner concluded his remarks at the dedication ceremony, he marveled at how the new space will add a new dimension, literally, to the student experience.

"Today, and for the next 100 years," he said, "we have a horizontal campus to match our vertical campus."

—GREGORY M. LEPORATI

'Dress Rehearsal' for Tomorrow's Higher Ed

Lessons learned and opportunities discovered in a year of transition

In May, as an academic year like no other came to a close, Baruch President S. David Wu called on the College community to anticipate the Fall 2021 semester with renewed purpose, calling it in his monthly blog at the time "one of the most important turning points in our recent history." He continued: "We have a window of opportunity—a precious gift, really—over the next year to conduct an institution-wide dress rehearsal for the future."

Now, with the semester nearing completion, students, professors, and staff have built on their experiences throughout the pandemic and have answered that call with reflection, hard work, and ingenuity, setting the stage for a pivotal academic year that could very well shape the future of higher education.

CULTIVATING CONNECTIVITY

For faculty and students, the initial transition to remote learning in March 2020 was made smoother thanks to advanced preparation and technology, particularly resources for faculty through Baruch's Center for Teaching and Learning. But there were also challenges. "We became aware that, for many students, their only source of computer equipment came through our loans, which were previously for short terms," says Arthur Downing, PhD, vice president for Information Services. "And many students had no reliable access to Wi-Fi. We knew we needed to take a different approach." Semester-long computer loans were implemented and remain in place, and donations of computers and Wi-Fi hotspots were made possible with government, corporate, and generous alumni and donor support.

As access challenges were resolved and online classes progressed, faculty and students found silver linings with the newfound flexibility of online courses.

"For students, who often have difficulty juggling commutes to campus, internships, jobs, and family obligations, online classes and appointments have allowed greater flexibility," says senior Alison Lee, current president of the Undergraduate Student Government (USG). Students, says Lee, have been able to attend even more workshops, from self-care to career counseling, and clubs have been creating more performative events online—from cooking competitions to magic shows—to entertain while also sharing information and camaraderie.

USG and Information Services have also greatly expanded online access to student resources, including a new, monthly events list on Google Drive; a digital survival guide complete with QR codes for quick access; a dedicated Instagram account for up-to-the-minute notifications; and the ongoing development of a "QR Comment Box," an open forum where students can anonymously submit questions and concerns.

The Office of Enrollment Management and Strategic Academic Initiatives even unveiled the "Bernie Bot" (a nod to the College's namesake, Bernard Baruch), an AI chat service that answers student questions and directs them to needed resources and appointments.

Of course, there have been challenges as well. "We had missed that sense of community and connectivity that we get on campus, in class, and at clubs and events," Lee says. Faculty, too, while rapidly upping their game in the use of technology for their classes and meetings, missed the in-person engagement and interaction with their students and colleagues. According to Allison Lehr-Samuels, director of Baruch's Center for Teaching and Learning, professors would often exchange ideas during faculty check-ins for new and creative ways to engage online classes.

"A nice thing about this experience," Lehr-Samuels says, "is that faculty continue to crowd-source ideas about academic integrity and engagement. There has been a lot of good sharing of best practices across departments."

AT THE FOREFRONT OF FLEXIBILITY

In the Fall 2021 semester, approximately two thirds of all classes are being held in an online or hybrid format, and seven classrooms are being equipped with additional technology—like interactive monitors, cameras, and audio equipment—to participate in a hybrid flexible (HyFlex) pilot program.

Combining in-person learning with synchronous and asynchronous online learning components, HyFlex, says Downing, "ideally involves making the option available to students to take their classes in whatever mode of instruction is most convenient on a particular day and being able to deliver the instruction and experience equally, so that everyone is learning together."

Although HyFlex is still a relatively new concept in academia, researchers have found no significant differences in academic outcomes between it and traditional course formats. With more colleges and universities, like Baruch, experimenting with HyFlex models, even more data likely will soon be available to help further evaluate whether this will emerge as a leading trend in higher education.

To assist in offering dynamic HyFlex courses, Downing and his team also are rethinking and repurposing on-campus spaces. Creating more flexible areas for students to attend online class or have a quiet place for study is a priority, resulting in building stronger Wi-Fi end-to-end across campus. And the auditory challenges of face-to-face instruction while wearing protective masks are being addressed, Downing says, with microphones and amplifiers to improve acoustics.

With the combined efforts and enthusiasm of the entire College community, this dress rehearsal is off to a great start.

—NANETTE MAXIM



President Wu poses for a selfie with students at the 25th Street Clivner=Field Plaza.

A Message from the Director of Alumni Relations and Volunteer Engagement

Dear Alumni:

When I am asked what I do for a living, I often respond: “I am in the belonging business.” Belonging, in the words of author Brené Brown, “is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us.” It is a feeling of “deep relatedness and acceptance,” according to Radha Agrawal, author and founder of the Daybreaker global dance movement.

We in the Office of Alumni Relations and Volunteer Engagement aspire for you to experience this feeling of relatedness and acceptance when you attend a Baruch event and network with alumni and students. We understand this need to belong is universal and continue to expand our industry, affinity, corporate, and global alumni networks to create more opportunities for connection and belongingness.

We welcome your recommendations for how we could increase your sense of belonging within the great Baruch alumni network. You are part of a community of more than 160,000 alumni worldwide, and you all belong.

Most sincerely,

Janet B. Rossbach

Janet B. Rossbach

P.S. Please find me on LinkedIn and connect!

50s | **Morris Adato** ('59), an experienced consumer electronics professional, released his second book, *Witness to Innovation: Stories from the Analog Back Roads to the Digital Highway* (Self-Published, 2021), which explores the evolution of merchandising personal computers and other technologies. It is available for purchase on Amazon.

60s | In March, **Morton Faden** ('63) self-published *Advice To My Grandchildren (and kids of all ages)*. The book is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. For the sixth consecutive year,

Ed Mendlowitz ('63), emeritus partner, WithumSmith+Brown, was recognized in *Accounting Today's* list of the Top 100 Most Influential People in Accounting. The list identifies the thought leaders, change makers, regulators, and other leaders who are shaping the profession. **Alan E. Weiner** ('63) authored an article, “Becoming Successful in Today’s Professional World,” in *The CPA Journal*. In the piece, Weiner, a former president of the New York State Society of CPAs, writes about his successful career and shares advice with young professionals about mentorship and networking.

70s | Political cartoonist **Richard Friedman** ('72) self-published his latest book, *The Greatest 2021 Book of Political Cartoons: Edition 1: January – June*. His books are available on Amazon. **Gerald Score** (MBA '75) authored an opinion piece in the *New York Daily News* entitled “Investing in Kids Pays Real Dividends,” which argues that additional public funding of childcare and education would yield the greatest possible returns. **Alan D. Gaines** ('76) joined the board of directors of the Limestone Boat Company.

80s | AgriFORCE Growing Systems, an agriculture-focused technology company, appointed **Richard M. Levychin** ('82) to its board of directors. Levychin is a partner in Galleros Robinson’s Commercial Audit and Assurance practice. LMP Automotive Holdings appointed **Robert Bellaflores** ('87) chief financial officer. **Steven Lipiner** (MBA '87) joined the Baruch College Fund (BCF) Board of Trustees in April. He is the CFO of State Street Global Advisors. **Pierre W. Beausejour** ('89) authored *A Requiem for Evolution* (Christian Faith Publishing, 2021), a thought-provoking book that seeks to provide proof of the existence of God. He previously worked for nearly two decades within the NYC Board of Education as a math teacher and advisor.

90s | *Cablesfax Magazine* named **Daphne M. Leroy** ('93) to its “Top 100 Most Influential Multi-Ethnic Executives in Media.” She serves as vice president of strategy in the ViacomCBS Ad Sales group. **Stephanie Smith** ('96) joined the BCF Board of Trustees in June. She serves as chief operating officer at BlackRock. In April, **Rachel Torres** ('96, MPA '04) was named national director of the Job Corps Program, an initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Labor that provides academic and technical training, workforce preparation, and support services for low-income young adults. In this role, she oversees the program’s budget and its 123 centers across the country. President Biden appointed **Dr. Tony Allen** (MPA '98) as the chair of the President’s Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Allen has served as president of Delaware State University since January 2020.

continued on next page

Documenting the Gray Areas Filmmaker Sam Pollard ('73)

Emmy Award-winning and Oscar-nominated director, editor, and producer Sam Pollard ('73) has told powerful stories of African American history and lives—from the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., to photographer Gordon Parks. The inspiration, he says, comes from within: “These stories are part of my DNA.”

Growing up in Harlem during the fight for civil rights and the turbulence of the Vietnam War, Mr. Pollard turned to movies like Parks’s coming-of-age story, *The Learning Tree*, the songs of Marvin Gaye, and the courage of Dr. King to build a life with purpose. Following an early interest in electrical engineering and enrollment at Borough of Manhattan Community College, he transferred to Baruch, where he majored in marketing and joined the College’s fencing team—but he had yet to find his true passion.

A WNET-sponsored film-training workshop, recommended by a Baruch advisor, awakened something within him. “I didn’t have any experience in film,” Pollard recalls. “I just loved movies.”

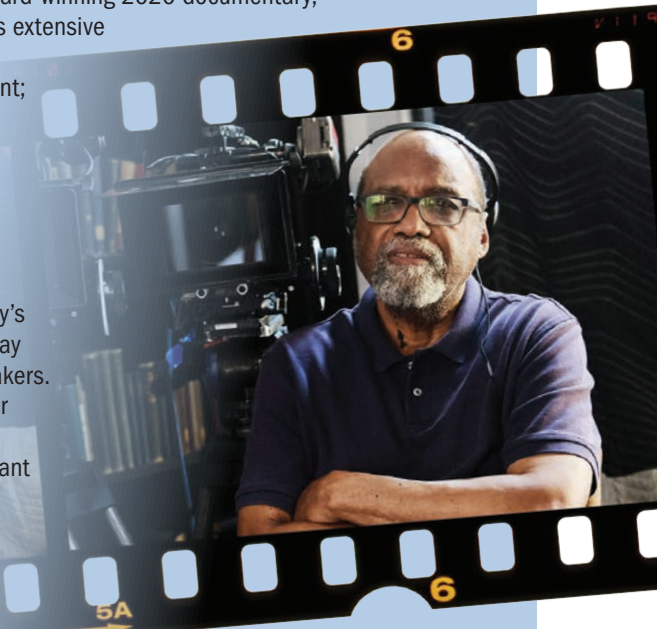
He would later work with mentors like acclaimed filmmakers Victor Kanefsky, George Bowers, and Saint Clair Bourne, all of whom instilled confidence in him to tell stories of the figures and events that shaped his life. A director or editor on more than 40 films, Pollard has earned a host of accolades, including a career achievement award in 2020 from the International Documentary Association. Collaborator Spike Lee has called him “a master filmmaker.”

Revealing the complexity of the human experience is a hallmark of Pollard’s work. “Making documentaries is like doing anthropological research to find the whole person, the whole story,” he says. “And when you dig deep, the story is never black and white.”

Notable recent work includes his award-winning 2020 documentary, *MLK/FBI*, exploring J. Edgar Hoover’s extensive surveillance campaign to discredit Dr. King and the civil rights movement; 2021’s *Black Art: In the Absence of Light*, examining the work of contemporary visual artists; and his forthcoming *Citizen Ashe*, an intricate portrait of the activist and tennis champion Arthur Ashe.

As a professor in New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, Pollard today serves as a mentor for young filmmakers. “One thing I learned from Saint [Clair Bourne] is it’s important to tell the stories,” he explains. “So it’s important for me to be involved, to keep giving back.”

—NANETTE MAXIM



00s | **Paul Orbe** (MPA '00) received a Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program award, allowing him to share his knowledge and make connections abroad. Orbe teaches high school and college-level biology and chemistry in New Jersey. LifeMD, a direct-to-consumer telemedicine company,

appointed **Marc D. Benathen** ('02) as chief financial officer. Benathen—a former president of the Baruch College Alumni Association—previously served as CFO of Blink Fitness. In March, **Rita Ormsby** (MPA '02) retired from Baruch as an information services librarian and associate professor. She was inducted

into the Special Libraries Association's Hall of Fame in 2020 and had worked at Baruch since 1998. Congratulations, Rita! **Keisha V. Thompson** ('02) directed the film *There All Along*, a documentary that tells the story of the women involved in the 1970 "Black Power Revolution" in Trinidad and Tobago. Thompson is

Washington Trailblazer

State Supreme Court Justice G. Helen Whitener ('88)

Justice G. Helen Whitener's career has been a series of "firsts."

The latest came in November 2020, when she won election to retain her seat on Washington State's Supreme Court—a position to which she had been appointed by Governor Jay Inslee in April of that year. With that victory, she says, came a revelation: "Unbeknownst to me, I became the first Black person in the state of Washington to win a statewide election."

Having ascended to the state's high court after nearly 20 years of serving as a prosecutor, defense attorney, and judicial officer, Justice Whitener is also the first Black woman to serve on the Washington Supreme Court and the state's first Black LGBTQ judge.

Being a trailblazer is something Justice Whitener didn't consciously seek, she says, but "as I moved up the ranks, my visibility became more and more important to what I was doing." She currently serves on a number of boards and committees that speak out for those marginalized by race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability.

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Justice Whitener emigrated to the United States alone as a teenager to receive critical medical treatment for a back condition. She earned her Baruch BBA in international marketing and, later, a law degree from Seattle University School of Law. In 2015, under the auspices of the U.S. Embassy, she returned to her native country to speak about respect, self-worth, and LGBTQ rights, at a time when same-sex relationships there were punishable with up to 20 years in prison. That law was ruled unconstitutional in 2018.

Mentorship also plays a significant role in Justice Whitener's life. "Our judiciary is not representative of the people they serve," she says. In collaboration with fellow judges and organizations, she has led the creation of programs that encourage marginalized girls to pursue careers in law.

"We didn't get here on our own," says Justice Whitener. "We're standing on the shoulders of others, which means they created that path for us. We have a responsibility as we move forward to create a path for others."

—NANETTE MAXIM



an associate professor of psychology at Kingsborough Community College. Google promoted **Yaron Drucker** (MBA '05) to staffing lead of its Cloud Tech Israel department. As part of the role, he will lead the hiring for Google's new Cloud Chip Design Center in Tel Aviv. **Cristina Guglielmetti** (MBA '05), a certified financial planner, was quoted in a *New York Times* article in July about financial planning for new graduates. **Matti Hasselmann** (MPA '05) celebrated her second year serving as assistant dean of academic affairs at NYU Long Island School of Medicine. The Defined Contribution Institutional Investment Association recognized **Sibil Sebastian Patri** (EMS '05) as a "Rising Star" during its Diversity & Inclusion Awards celebration in late 2020. Patri serves as vice president, strategy and corporate development, at American Century Investments. **Natalie Cofield** (MPA '06) is the assistant administrator for the Office of Women's Business Ownership at the U.S. Small Business Administration. In this role, she provides executive oversight of the office and champions female entrepreneurship. **Tom Congdon** (MPA '06), the executive deputy and deputy chair of the New York State Department of Public Service, was named to two *City & State* "Power 100" lists of New York's most influential leaders, ranking first in Telecommunications and 26th in Energy and Environment. **Amit Sharma** (MBA '06) joined U.S.-based bakery company Hostess Brands, Inc. as vice president of investor relations. **Winston Chiu** ('07), the founder and CEO of Feed Forward, was named to the "40 Under 40 Rising Food Stars in NYC Food Policy" by Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center. This summer, PwC promoted **Katherine Huh** ('07) to partner. She and her husband, **Andy Huh** ('08), live in the Berkshires with their three children. In June, the New York State

continued on next page

Sustainable Snacking

Matt Feldman ('15) Pioneers Mushroom Jerky

Snacking while vegan can be a challenge—just ask entrepreneur Matt Feldman ('15), founder and CEO of Moku Foods. After learning about the lack of sustainability in the meat industry and the health benefits of plant-based nutrition, he committed to a vegan diet. "It made me feel great, physically, mentally, spiritually," says Mr. Feldman, who was then working in Silicon Valley tech sales but yearning to start his own business. He had only one problem: "What was I going to snack on?"

Craving something chewy, savory, delicious, and filling, Feldman set about doing some research. "I saw that beef jerky was a \$4 billion business in the U.S., and vegan was...nothing," he says, adding, "A lightbulb went on!" His kitchen was soon full of experiments as he attempted to make jerky with portobello mushrooms and other sustainably grown ingredients.

Feldman officially launched Moku Foods in 2019 with assistance from Thomas Bowman, former head of product development at Eat Just, who helped refine the jerky with meatier king oyster mushrooms. The two developed flavors like Hawaiian Teriyaki and Sweet & Spicy, with more on the way. Sales through Amazon and Thrive Market helped raise brand awareness, and Feldman was named to the 2021 *Forbes* "30 Under 30" list for Food and Drink.

Seeing opportunities is a constant for Feldman, who, while studying finance at Baruch and playing point guard for the men's basketball team, launched two businesses: Cinco Terras Specialty Coffees and Undorm.com, a brokerage to help students find convenient, affordable housing.

Feldman knew the importance of sustainable living from growing up in Oahu, Hawaii. "Our small island imports more than 80 percent of our food," he says. "You have to be very careful about your choices and the impact they have."

In Hawaiian, *moku* means land division. "A name associated with the land and the island made a lot of sense for us," says Feldman, who donates 1 percent of Moku's profits to organizations that feed the hungry and teach kids to grow their own food. "We're producing food that helps sustain the planet."

—NANETTE MAXIM



A Harman Homecoming for Author Daphne Palasi Andreades ('15)

Life came full circle this past year for Daphne Palasi Andreades ('15). The up-and-coming author served as Baruch's Spring 2021 Harman Writing Fellow within the Sidney Harman Writer-in-Residence Program, in which Ms. Andreades had participated as a student only a few years ago.

"When they reached out to me about participating, I remembered all that I had learned from the program and how formative it had been," says Andreades, who delivered a Zoom reading and lecture in April for the Baruch community.

It's been a whirlwind few years for Andreades. She recently signed a two-book deal with Random House, and her debut novel, *Brown Girls*, is set for release in the United States in January 2022, as well as in Europe. *Brown Girls* explores the lives of working- and middle-class women of color in Queens, NY; an excerpt from the book won the 2019 *Kenyon Review* Short Fiction Contest.

"There are so many years and labor that go into just finishing the manuscript itself," she says. "Then there's a whole other process: finding the right agent, going on submission, finding the right editor. It's all been really exciting."

Andreades, a Queens native whose parents immigrated to New York from the Philippines in the nineties, came to Baruch hoping to study journalism, thinking it would be the perfect way to combine her interests in writing and telling stories about her community. But she soon found herself drawn more toward English courses and contemporary literature.

After graduation, she backpacked through Southeast Asia and became an ESL teacher in Thailand before returning to New York to pursue a Master of Fine Arts from Columbia University. Acclaimed author Paul Beatty became her faculty mentor, and she soon began working on the short story that would become *Brown Girls*—a story that earned her Columbia's 2018 Henfield Prize.

Andreades hopes her forthcoming novel will help current Baruch students see themselves reflected in literature.

"It was important to me to write a story that centered on immigrants, people of color, and those on the margins," she said. "I wanted to illustrate the complexities that exist within these communities, as well as celebrate their beauty, solidarity, and their spirit of determination and joy."

—GREGORY M. LEPORATI



Senate confirmed **Rory Christian** (MBA '08) as commissioner of the NYS Public Service Commission, which oversees and regulates electric and gas industries across the state. He previously served as the director of New York Clean Energy at the Environmental Defense Fund. At the beginning of the year, Seward & Kissel LLP promoted **Danielle Lemberg** ('08) to counsel. Co-founder of the firm's Women's Initiative and a member of its Business Transactions Group, she represents private equity and other investment management firms, private companies, and other clients in a range of business transactions. The American Institute of CPAs named **Ewelina Meczowska** ('09) to its list of recipients of the 2020 "Forensic and Valuation Services Standing Ovation" award. She serves as the vice president of finance at Kohlberg & Company.

10s | **Steven Nunez** ('10) was promoted to associate general counsel at the Executive Office for Immigration Review in the U.S. Department of Justice. Prior to joining the department as an attorney advisor in 2018, he clerked at the Indiana Supreme Court. **Charles A. Montorio-Archer** (EMPA '11) authored *Everybody Paddles: A Leader's Blueprint for Creating a Unified Team* (River Grove Books, 2021), in which he outlines a new blueprint for building office teamwork and camaraderie. He serves as president and chief executive officer of nonprofit One Hope United. Bit Digital, Inc., a bitcoin mining company, appointed **Justin Zhu** ('11, MS '12) vice president of finance. **Sheina Ebrani** ('12) and her husband co-founded Stefano Navi, a jewelry store specializing in sustainable diamond engagement rings. In response to the pandemic, the company offers an online, try-at-home program for customers who do not want to travel to brick-and-mortar stores. **Lin Shen** (MS '13) was appointed to the BCF Board of Trustees in February. He is a senior accountant, SEC reporting, at Assurant,



Love Blossoms

It was a picturesque wedding for Heather Schultz Gittens ('08, MPA '14) and Hasani Gittens ('02), who tied the knot in May at the Queens Botanical Garden. Heather is the founder of Huh Healing Hub LLC, a public relations consultant for the Tito app, and an adjunct lecturer at Baruch College, while Hasani is deputy editor of *The City*, a nonprofit, digital news platform.

Inc. **Abraham Akanmu** ('14) and **Noshin Hossain** ('19) received Success Academy Excellence Awards. Akanmu teaches sixth-grade history and Hossain teaches sixth-grade science as part of the Success Academy Charter Schools in NYC. **David Khandrius** ('15) is the co-founder of Peachy, a company that builds scalable e-commerce experiences on services like Shopify. He spoke with *Authority Magazine* in August about lessons the retail industry has learned during the pandemic. **Konstantin Zborovskiy** (MPA '16) serves as the chief operating officer in the division of youth and family justice for the NYC Administration for Children's Services. He previously worked for organizations

including KPMG and the New York City Campaign Finance Board. **Mirjana Llana** ('18) co-founded Ekosfere, a company that provides convenient, waste-free door-to-door delivery of cleaning products and also picks up customers' compost in all five boroughs of New York City. Outside of Ekosfere, Llana serves as an associate at Siris Capital Group.

20s | **Patrick Labossiere** (MA '20) authored an article in *Huffington Post* about his inspirational recovery story. He was hit by a subway train 11 years ago, suffering multiple severe injuries, but has since regained his independence and graduated from Baruch with a 3.8 GPA.

The NYC Department of Small Business Services promoted **Anna Yakubova** (EMPA '20) to assistant commissioner. She has worked for the department for 10 years in a variety of roles. In September, the BCF Board named **Mayer Estinville** ('21) a graduate trustee. He serves as a business analyst at Kearney.

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IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Two BCF Leaders



The Baruch community mourns the passing of two extraordinary and generous leaders: Bernard L. Laterman ('52) (left) and Irwin R. Ettinger ('58).

“Bernie was very passionate about Baruch—he was first in his family to go to college and credited Baruch for his subsequent success on Wall Street,” said

BCF trustee Dov Schlein ('70, MBA '75). “He would reach out to students and help with mentorships... I will greatly miss his enthusiasm and sound advice.” Laterman served as a trustee of the Baruch College Fund for nearly four decades and as its president from 1988 to 1990.

Ettinger was a trustee of the BCF from 2001 until his passing, serving for much of that time as chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee. His generosity to Baruch was demonstrated by his endowment of the Irwin and Arlene Ettinger Chair in Accountancy.

“Irwin leveraged his extensive accounting and finance experience to help streamline the BCF’s financial reports and budget process,” said trustee Luz Liebeskind ('85, EMS '08). “I’ll remember his commitment to Baruch... he had a very sharp and inquisitive mind.”

ABOUT THE BENCHMARK SOCIETY

The society honors individuals who have included Baruch College in their will or trust, used retirement fund assets or life insurance to make a gift, or established life income gifts that benefit the College. In so doing, members have chosen to support Baruch beyond their lifetimes as Bernard Baruch did himself. Please contact Laura Kotkin at 646-660-6074 or laura.kotkin@baruch.cuny.edu to learn more.

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- Philip R. Hoffman '47
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