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### A Diamond Gem in Brooklyn, Kingsborough Community College Turns 60

BY DR. CLAUDIA V. SCHRADER

The year was 1963. The Beatles released the hit song "I Want to Hold Your Hand," the United States Postal Service implemented the ZIP code system, Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary closed due to the high cost of maintenance, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, a dozen eggs cost 45 cents, a gallon of gas cost 29 cents, and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, DC. In Kings County, dreams were about to begin for Brooklyn residents through the establishment of Kingsborough Community College, the borough's second and currently only community college.

A year later, 468 students made their way to Kingsborough. There were two campuses initially, one in mid-Brooklyn at the Masonic Temple and a second in Sheepshead Bay, thanks to the efforts and advocacy of Herman Field. Ultimately, the Manhattan Beach campus would become the location of the sole campus of Kingsborough Community

College.

While Jacob Hartstein would have the distinction of being the College's first president, Leon Goldstein, the College's fourth president, is credited with developing many of the campus buildings and pioneering many important student success programs.

Nestled on the southeastern edge of Brooklyn, overlooking Sheepshead Bay, Jamaica Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, it is not surprising that a lighthouse sits atop our Marine Academic Building because the College has been a beacon of opportunity for the over 65,000 students that have graduated since the College's founding. From its start, Kingsborough has been committed to providing Brooklynites and citizens of this great city access to affordable education.

For 60 years, Kingsborough has been a pioneer in removing barriers to entry; making investments that support persistence, retention, and completion; and providing support that mitigates the hidden



This archive photo shows Kingsborough Community College (KCC) students during the institution's formative years. In September, KCC celebrates its 60th Anniversary.

costs of a college degree. Under the leadership of its first female president, Dr. Regina Peruggi, Kingsborough experienced record enrollment growth and continued innovation. Under her guidance, a food bank was established, the first within CUNY, which provided food for students experiencing varying levels of food insecurity. Our Open Doors Learning Community became a national model for student success, and in 2013, the

College was named one of the top four community colleges in the country when it was selected as a finalist for the brand new Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence from the Aspen Institute.

Joining Kingsborough in 2018 as the newest president on the block, I have experienced my share of Kingsborough history as we would go on to be named an Aspen top ten finalist again in 2019 and 2023, receive its largest donation in the history of the College from Leonard Riggio, establish a satellite location in East New York; and rank No.1 on Niche's 2022 list of the Best Community Colleges in New York. In a few weeks, I will mark five years at Kingsborough. I continue to be inspired each day by the students who make their way to our gates and the incredible faculty and staff that meet them there, ready and excited to support, mentor, teach, and propel them to greater heights.

September marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Kingsborough Community College. It's fitting that this is our

"Diamond Strength" anniversary because, while the College has endured such devastations as Superstorm Sandy and a world pandemic, Kingsborough has survived. And, like the hardest gem known to man, we continue to shine.

*Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is the president of Kingsborough Community College, which was founded in 1963 as part of the City University of New York (CUNY). Kingsborough stands steadfast in its mission of providing both liberal arts and career education, promoting student learning and development, as well as strengthening and serving its diverse community. Situated on a 70-acre campus in the Manhattan Beach community, its tranquil seaside location is a perfect setting for reflective academic pursuits, yet the College's active engagement in the community provides students with exciting opportunities to become productive participants in a growing and vital borough. To learn more about Kingsborough, visit its website [www.kbcc.cuny.edu](http://www.kbcc.cuny.edu).*

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