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CHOICE

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Early Fall, 2001

Volume 8, Issue 5

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**Distinguished visitors
to the Flushing site
this month included:
Rabbi Elihu Marcus,
Mr. Lee Weiss, and
Mr. Carmi Schwartz.**

Editorial

Yes, We Are Family

The student speakers at the commencement exercises represent the best of the crop that this institution churns out each year. One always walks out of the graduation ceremonies with a renewed sense of vigor and hope. More than just a passport to better jobs, their diploma has a story to tell — the tribulations and despair that visit a worker changing career, a young and/or single parent, the unemployed, or the newcomer to this country; the simmering hope for a better life, and for once, a sense of conquest and self-affirmation.

Coming from different corners of the country and the globe, each student comes with a unique story, yet with an universal, enduring and unchanging theme — the desire for freedom from the clutches of ignorance, poverty and/or discrimination. The first wedge of choice is liberation of the mind. And through their educational journey, many of these students have found in Touro their first family and source of tough love, support, and encouragement. For the nurturing staff and faculty, it remains their privilege to be part of the students' most intimate yearnings, struggles, triumphs and joys.

Dr. Dennis Walcott Addresses Class of 2001

Close to a thousand spectators jammed the corridors and upper bleachers of the Manhattan Center to cheer the 340 graduates of Class 2001. The guest speaker, Dr. Dennis M. Walcott of the New York Urban League, exhorted the graduates to surge ahead with their lives regardless of the difficulties that lie ahead. Student speakers included Sara Rodriguez, Charles Stoll, and Milagros Vega.

Standing for College President Dr. Bernard Lander, Dean Stanley Boylan conferred the degrees with the assistance of Deans Eva Spinelli, Leon Perkal, and Timothy Taylor.

Dean Spinelli Leads in Honoring Students from all Sites for Academic and Service Achievements

On May 25, 2001, Flushing honored its students with distinguished academic records and community service initiatives. Guests included Dean Eva Spinelli, Dean Tim Taylor, Dr. Raul Garcia, Site Director of Sunset Park, Ms. Xiao Yan Cai, Associate Registrar. The faculty in attendance included Professors Bruce Milzoff, Dean Mandell, Sue Rosenberg, Carmen Becker, and Gene Kulezhov. Mira Ibragimova, Flushing Coordinator of the Learning Resource and Testing Center (LRTC) assisted the

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Dean Taylor Joins Touro's Glitterati at the Graduation Prom

The annual prom held at the Taino Towers was graced by Dean Timothy Taylor, Associate Dean of Students and concurrent Director of the Learning Resource and Testing Center, Prof. Carmen Becker, Mr. Manny Orden, site director of Flushing, Mr. Daniel Colon, site director of Taino, and his lovely wife, Prof. Elsie Colon.

It was organized by the multi-talented Mary Dee Bentley-Crocker along with Ednita Cheek, Rashida Garner, and Qwonjit Nelson.

The formal affair started at 9 PM and lasted with variegated beats, rhythms, sumptuous food and drinks through 3 AM.

International Cultural Festival Is Full of Surprises

Deans Eva Spinelli, Leon Perkal, and Timothy Taylor, and Advisement Director Ms. Mirela Burca Sandu joined students, staff and faculty in celebrating the annual International Festival at Flushing. Ms. Desmona Hanson emceed the program.

A Korean lilt was sung by Sung Shin Youn, Sung Nan Oh, Su Mi

Choi, Jiwon Kang, and Kyung Ja Kim. Ran Young Jun displayed her virtuosity with the keyboard.

Aliye Ak rendered a Turkish song. Monika Divi, Asha Rani, Pushpa Rani, Sumanlatha Mohandas, and Raj Rani Masih modeled Indian dresses, followed by an Indian dance by Raj Rani Masih.

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Dean Spinelli Leads in Honoring Students

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Flushing Site Director
Manny Orden in present-
ing the awards.

Sunset Park
celebrated its Service and
Special Recognition
Ceremony Day for its
graduates on May 22,
2001, presided over by
its Site Director, Dr.
Raul Garcia. Guests in-
cluded Dean Eva Spinelli,
Dean Timothy Taylor,
Director of Ad-
visement/Counseling
Mirela Burca Sandu,

Lenin Ortega, Associate
Registrar Xiao Yan Cai,
and Manny Orden.

The Midtown
Campus Had its Annual
Students Appreciation
Day on May 16, 2001
presided by Mr. Charles
Mason, the Midtown
Campus Site Director.

On the same day,
the Taino Campus headed
by Mr. Daniel Colon, Site
Director, held a luncheon
and awards program hon-
oring the students.

International Cultural Festival

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The Scottish Folk Song
"Auld Lang Syne" was rendered
by Chinese students: Joey Shi, Lei
Fang, Yun Qian Cao, Lina Sui, Bi
Hong Mei, Ling Ying, Ying Li,
Sung Shin Youn, Sung Nan Ok,
Jacy Shi, Zou Fu Ying, Chan Ho
Kam Lai, Tung Suet Kam.

The Colombian Dance
"Cumbia" was presented by Paola
Sanin, Cielo Jaramillo, Gloria
Arenas, and Mary Salcedo, the
choreographer. In closing, Prof.
Joyce Sauer thanked the partici-
pants. Dean Spinelli, faculty,
staff and students handed a bou-
quet of flowers to Mira Ibragi-
movva, LRTC Coordinator, for
organizing the event.

Reaching Out Beyond the College Walls

Faculty, staff
and students donated
food, water, and cloth-
ing to the victims of
the El Salvador earth-
quake that hit the area
early this year. Volun-
teers at the El Salvador
Embassy accepted the
donations.

Alumna Yvette Kenna Shares Poems

"The Unknown Child"

The first time I saw my child
It was in the hospital.
I was so full of joy
That words could not describe
How I truly felt inside.

Here was in my eyes
A beautiful healthy child.
Little did I know that something
Of the unknown was about to hap-
pen.

It was just seconds before I knew
that my son
Was not what any mother would
hope for.
He was not the beautiful healthy
child
That I once dreamed of having.

He has now become to many
As the "unknown child."

"Why?"

I wish things were a little different for
me.
I don't know why things go wrong for
me.

I try to do everything by the book.
But did you take a good look?
I'm not doing too good.

I wonder if I die,
Will I lie.
Will I tell God
It's not my turn?

What would he say?
I guess he will
Tell me to lie.

Wait a second!
What am I saying.

I just want to know
Why?

"Lost Souls"

I know how it feels
To be locked away
Like a seal.

Just like a seal
It longs for
Someone to hear
Its cry.

So, I ask you all
Listen to the cries of all.

It might not sound
Much.

But it is such that all
Will want to hear
And listen.

For a lost soul
Has lost its cause
Among the world
Of heartless souls.



We are Dwellers of Richer and Higher Regions

Claudia races down the hall as the fire alarm goes off. Most of the tenants are already squeezing their way through the stairs. By the time she gets to the end of the queue the smoke is billowing through the hallway, and Claudia thinks she hears some groaning coming from the opposite end. She turns around only to see an emaciated frame of an old lady who is just sliding her feet one at a time without lifting them up, warding off the smoke with her bare hands as she inches her way towards the stairs. The woman is coughing, her eyes almost half-closed and tears are streaming down her face. Claudia runs to the lady's rescue. Grabbing the latter's arm onto her shoulders, and her waist with the other hand, Claudia literally carries her down two flights of stairs into safety. That was two months ago.

Just last week, she happened to drive through a different route from her home to work. As she coasted down a busy intersection, she spotted four kids who had decided to cross a block away where there was no crossing guard. She then got off her car, motioned all the vehicles coming from different directions to stop as she clasped the hands of the tykes and herded them towards the sidewalk.

Reacting with admiration for her classmate Claudia, a student remarks, "Goodness must have been inside your person all along, and was just waiting for the right occasion to express itself." Another says, "Magnanimity does not calculate the risks or benefits of an action. It reaches out without second thoughts." The third student adds, "Claudia is a moral person. The moral act does not depend on one's personal predilections, skills or sophistication of knowledge. Claudia just saw the person as valuable in and by herself, and was worthwhile risking for without any expectation of reward." The fourth student declares, "There was no premeditation. Instinctively she just went ahead and saved lives. It is simple love for everyone *as beings without their usual burdensome categories and labels.*"

We are all awed by her utter self-abandonment when she disregards her own safety and comfort to help the woman and the four kids. During those moments, nay, perhaps even long before them, Claudia had abandoned the *self* and *became one with the other. Total embrace. Transcendence. "At-one-ment."* Words so familiar yet so elusive.

Love is perhaps the only act not prompted by any practical or material consideration except that of our sheer connected-ness with *the sacred other*, a bond as old as life itself. Claudia's actions intimate that even as we go through the turmoil and noise of daily life, we remain dwellers of richer and higher regions that may perhaps be imperceptible to the cold and calculating lenses of the schooled eye but are nonetheless manifested through the primitive impulses and warm rushes of the heart.