PRODUCING SUCCESSFUL CINEMA

Isen Robbins's CSI Experience Launched His Career as a Filmmaker
Second Annual Fall Fest
October 3, 2009
11:00am to 4:00pm
The Great Lawn
(For more information see page 28.)

Tasting Event
Save the Date
Sunday, October 11, 2009
4:00pm to 8:00pm
CSI Center for the Arts Atrium

In the tradition of our well-known past events, "Taste of Italy" and "Taste of the Mediterranean," the Alumni Association is proud to present a tasting event that will feature varied cuisines. Many Staten Island restaurants will be showcasing their signature dishes. It promises to be a feast for the senses. More information to follow.

CSI Gala
To raise funds for student scholarships
Save the Date
December 5, 2009
Richmond County Country Club
(Information will follow.)

CSI Mourns the Death of Senator John J. Marchi
The legacy of Senator Marchi is unmatched and no institution benefited more than CSI
from the President

On May 28 I told the graduating class of 2009 that they have earned a degree that is second to none; that they were trained by a world-class faculty; and that they are following in a proud tradition and joining an elite group – the alumni of the College of Staten Island.

I told the Class of 2009 that they are following in the footsteps of distinguished alumni who are leaders, thinkers, and good citizens; who are the backbone of the healthcare industry on Staten Island; who are the spine of primary and secondary education on Staten Island; who are journalists, entrepreneurs, bankers, engineers, judges, and elected officials; who are YOU and every profession represented by what you do and every contribution you make to our society.

The College of Staten Island is a college on the move – our Library is expanding; our science facilities are expanding; our faculty are increasing the number of research grants they are receiving, their work is being published in the best peer-reviewed journals; and they are mentoring over 150 doctoral students; more of our new faculty are being drawn from the most prestigious institutions of higher education; more of our undergraduate students are engaged in research and our students are being accepted into highly selective graduate and professional programs.

The value of a CSI degree will only continue to appreciate. CSI is on the verge of a new strategic planning process that is being designed to position our College among the top-tier public universities.

The College of Staten Island has received about 1,550 new residents—trees that were planted around the campus to add to those that already thrive on the 204-acre site. According to James Pepe, Assistant Vice President for Campus Planning and Facilities Management, the trees were planted under the auspices of MillionTreesNYC, an effort launched by NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg and New York Restoration Project (NYRP) founder Bette Midler. “The City of New York Parks & Recreation Department has partnered with the NYRP to plant trees throughout the five boroughs, with a goal of one million trees by 2017.

The President of CSI planning took place last April. Pepe says, “In an effort to break up some of the vast spaces between buildings, the new trees flank the major sidewalks and were placed in clusters in other areas with the hope of giving the campus more of a park-like setting.”

However, Pepe notes that “the full effects of these plantings will be felt in a few decades, once the trees have matured.

The second phase took place on Friday, May 1 during Dig in’s CUNY volunteer planting day, where University students, staff, and faculty helped plant about 750 smaller trees, in an effort to reforest the area between the retention pond and the electrical substation near the front of the campus. Volunteers simply placed the trees in pre-dug holes; contrary to the event’s name; no digging was required. Pepe states that all 750 were planted on May 1.

CSI POWERS DOWN FOR EARTH HOUR

The College of Staten Island joined other The City University of New York (CUNY) campuses and cities around the world on March 28 by participating in Earth Hour, an international effort to save energy around the planet by turning off lights and reducing power consumption for one hour.

Beginning at 8:30pm, the College turned off its informational marquee sign at the campus entrance; lights were turned off in skylit areas of the Campus Center the Library, and the Center for the Arts (unless classes or events were scheduled there); and Campus Peace Officers (CPOs) used bicycles exclusively for patrol of the campus.

The Sustainable CUNY Project, a University-wide effort to make all CUNY campuses greener, encouraged University students, faculty, and staff to take photos of their campuses contributions to Earth Hour Sustainable CUNY posted a slideshow of the photos on its Website ([webp. cuny. edu/about/sustainable. html], and created an electronic newsletter //www.cuny.edu/newsletter/sustainable.html], in an effort to inform the public of CUNY’s contributions to the event.

CSI Announces State Funding of FERRY SHUTTLE SERVICE

The College of Staten Island was awarded $410,000 in a JobAccess and Reverse Commute Grant from the New York State Department of Transportation for the operation of the New CSI - Staten Island Ferry Shuttle. The ferry shuttle operates direct service from the College’s Willowbrook campus to the St. George Ferry terminal. This service currently operates and runs every half-hour from 7:00am until 11:00pm on school days and hourly on non-school days.

“I am so pleased that President Morales initated this program,” says Jonathan Peters, Associate Professor of Finance at the College of Staten Island and a Research Fellow at the University Transportation Research Center “Every day that classes are in session, over 1,450 students and staff will arrive on campus, each having saved over 15 minutes each way in their daily commute. I have ridden the bus numerous times and it is a true joy to reach the terminal without extensive delay and to have a shuttle with a high frequency of service – it really reduces the stress of the commute.” Peters adds that he expects the shuttle to move approximately 217,000 riders this year.

This project was pilot tested in March of 2008 and funding for the service was pursued by the College for full implementation of the program for the 2008-2009 academic year. This grant allows the College to pursue additional funding sources for acquisition of equipment and support of operating costs in future years. The College expects that this service will significantly reduce traffic on Staten Island roads, lower demand for parking services on campus, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Staten Island, with the longest average commute in the nation, has numerous challenges in terms of mass transit services. This project was designed to directly address transportation needs that were identified in the Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan produced by the New York State Department of Transportation in 2010. In that report, the West Shore of Hylan Boulevard/West Shore of Staten Island (Zip Codes 10302, 10309, and 10314) is identified as a rapidly developing area that was designated a Priority Employment Market in need of alternative transportation.

In large measure, the strong growth has created a geographic mismatch in terms of employment centers and low-income worker households. People from 109 Zip Codes in the region are currently using the shuttle service, with a large number of riders traveling on other forms of transit prior to boarding the shuttle.

CSI's Campus GETS GREENER

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CSI Mourns the Death of SENATOR JOHN J. MARCHI

The legacy of Senator Marchi is unmatched and no institution benefited more than CSI. His unwavering support was the foundation of the College of Staten Island and his continued advocacy built our world-class campus. Senator Marchi’s influence and steadfast encouragement infused every milestone and achievement the College has reached. His presence on the campus and the Island will be missed, but he will always be remembered at CSI as a founding father. The College community sends its deepest sympathy to Maria Luisa, his children, and family.

CSI has had the privilege of counting Senator Marchi as a friend for many decades. His intelligence, probity, and dedication have been of particular inspiration, and his commitment to public service has been of immense value to the people of Staten Island, New York City, New York State, and beyond.

Throughout the 1970s, Senator Marchi was at the forefront of issues such as reform of the New York City school system and educational change. His position as Chairman of the Finance Committee made him instrumental in dealing with New York City’s mid-1970s fiscal crisis.

Senator Marchi made education, from elementary to college, an important focus. He sat on, or chaired, committees that examined a variety of educational issues from school decentralization to public school funding. He was a crucial factor in the formation of the College of Staten Island, and played a role in the oversight of CUNY operations. Perhaps his crowning achievement was securing the College of Staten Island’s 204-acre campus, the land of the former Willowbrook State School.

Throughout the years, he has ensured that CSI received the funding that it needed to improve its services, expand its course offerings, and conduct vital research. Over 50,000 alumni have graduated from CSI and most have remained in the greater New York area. CSI remains the only state-funded college in the borough.

In 2006, Senator John J. Marchi, a native Staten Islander, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the College of Staten Island for his lifelong endeavors to improve the quality of life for everyone in the borough.

THE SENATOR JOHN J. MARCHI VISITING PROFESSORSHIP IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The retirement of John J. Marchi from the New York State Senate prompted CSI to honor his service and continue the Senator’s approach of thoughtful, rigorous analysis of public affairs with the creation of this endowed visiting professorship. Across a range of subjects—fiscal policy, education reform, and local governance, among many others—Senator Marchi maintained a commitment to judge issues, in his words, “on the merits.” The Senator paid close attention to the facts, and placed a high premium on careful, dispassionate analysis. The distinguished scholars appointed to the John J. Marchi Visiting Professorship will continue this vital tradition.

With the selection of the first Marchi Scholar Professor Cameron Gordon from the University of Canberra, Australia. CSI has begun to recruit nationally recognized senior scholars to apply expertise in a policy area of importance to the Staten Island community for a one- or two-year term.

Staten Island faces public policy challenges that require the application of the very best ideas from around the nation and the world. The Professorship will bring scholars to the College who can research, teach, and write about fresh, new approaches in fields of local importance such as transportation, environment, community-building, public health, and housing policy.

In addition to teaching and research duties, the holder of the Marchi Visiting Professorship will work closely with the Center for the Study of Staten Island—the public affairs arm of the College—to plan conferences and develop community projects. Much like Senator Marchi himself, holders of the Marchi Visiting Professorship will in the truest sense bridge the gap between the academy and the community by analyzing ideas of practical importance “on the merits.”

THE SENATOR JOHN J. MARCHI PAPERS

The Marchi Papers in the CSI Library Archives & Special Collections include correspondence, reports, news clippings, press releases, legislative bills, and subject files from 1965 to 1998. The donation of his collection prompted Former Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano and the late Former Assemblywomen Elizabeth Connolly to do the same. Current sitting elected officials have also committed this type of donation to the Special Archives at the CSI Library. The Senator’s donation of his papers to the College in 1999 and his subsequent support has established the Archives & Special Collections as the most important resource for the study of Staten Island’s political history.

The subject files document the activities of Senator Marchi and closely reflect his leadership roles. The Senator’s commitment to education is well documented in the subject files. Many of these files provide an insight into the inner workings of the state legislature, but the legislative files provide the most in-depth coverage. They consist of correspondence, bills, bill action registers, memoranda of support, and press clippings. There are several boxes of transcripts of debates on important bills and a wide collection of photos tracing his career and accomplishments.
CSI MARKETING STUDENTS INVADE MADISON AVENUE

As the economy continues to slide, affecting families nationwide, two Peer Mentors at The Verrazano School at the College of Staten Island decided to do something to bring some holiday cheer to Staten Island children in need. Last December,

Christina Rossi and Stephanie Vislos organized a Toys for Tots Drive to coincide with the Peer Mentor team’s end-of-semester holiday party and by the time the collecting was complete they had received approximately 50 toys, donated by freshman, sophomore, and junior students.

Rossi and Vislos then arranged for the toys to be picked up by the Marine Corps league for distribution to local children in need.

Katie Geschwendt, Coordinator of The Verrazano School and the FIRST Program at CSI notes that this is the second community outreach effort that has been organized by the Peer Mentors, commenting that Mentors collected school supplies totaling $300 during New Student Orientation before the fall 2008 semester.

As for the toy drive, Geschwendt says that “this was the first Toys for Tots drive run through the program, but...The Mentors are enthusiastic about making this a recurring event.”

Explaining one of the reasons for their hard work and commitment, Geschwendt explains that the Mentors feel that it is important to engage new students through giving back to the Staten Island community. Many of the Verrazano students grew up on Staten Island and feel a strong connection to the local schools, so the Toys for Tots drive was one way to show their support for Staten Island youth. Through the efforts of the Mentors as well as the generous contributions of Verrazano students, the drive was a huge success. It is a great privilege to work with students who are conscientious and motivated, and I am grateful to the Peer Mentors for their service to the program and for organizing the Toys for Tots Drive.

Verrazano School Peer Mentors work in teams of two during the fall semester to provide mentoring for incoming freshmen within a Verrazano School learning community. They help freshmen with the transition from high school to college in some of the following ways: assist with navigating the CSI campus, organize social events for students, communicate with faculty, keep students updated on program events and information, organize study groups for classes, and generally serve as a resource for new CSI students in The Verrazano School.

VERRAZANO SCHOOL MENTORS BRING HOLIDAY CHEER

CSI NAMED TO PRESIDENTIAL HONOR ROLL FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Corporation for National and Community Service honored the College of Staten Island (CSI) with a place on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for exemplary service efforts and service to America’s communities.

“The College of Staten Island is continuing to strengthen its longstanding tradition of public service. The latest national recognition is a reflection of the great work that CSI students, faculty, and staff do every day in service to their community,” said Dr. Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor of The City University of New York.

“We are honored by this prestigious distinction,” said Dr. Tomas Morales, President of CSI, “and I am proud of the hard work and dedication of our students, as well as the visionary leadership of our student support professionals who helped make this possible. As a senior college of The City University of New York, and the only institution of public higher education on Staten Island, CSI is committed to serving the rich diversity of our community and city.”

Launched in 2006, the Community Service Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition that a school can achieve for its commitment to service learning and civic engagement. Honorees for the award are chosen based on a series of selection factors including scope and innovation of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service, and the extent to which the school offers academic service-learning courses.

CSI’s Emerging Leaders Program earned the College high ranks, especially the student participation in the New York City Department of Homeless Services’ Project HOPE survey. The HOPE survey is conducted annually in January to produce an accurate estimate of the total number of unsheltered individuals on the streets and in the subway system.

CSI students also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity to help build the interiors of several housing units for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. Habitat is known for organizing the Toys for Tots Drive. "We salute the College of Staten Island for making community service a campus priority, and thank the millions of college students who are helping to renew America through service to others," said President Goldstein.

The College of Staten Island is one of only 29 schools in the nation to receive recognition. CSI is one of only 29 schools in America that encourage their students to serve others, "said the Corporation’s CEO and President, Dr. Michael Peskin. In total, 655 schools were recognized.

For more information, go to www.nationalservice.gov.
**CSI Hillel Lends Helping Hands in New Orleans**

The College of Staten Island honored in its January 2009 Associate of Applied Science Nursing graduates last January in the Center for the Arts Concert Hall. A diverse and eclectic group of 81 graduate nurses received their CSI Nursing Pins and took the International Council of Nurses Pledge during the traditional Nightingale lamp ceremony.

The student speaker was Francis McCarthy, who was chosen for this honor as a result of her outstanding academic record. Christine Narducci, the student chairperson and master of ceremonies for this event, moderated the ceremony and Senior Andrew Lanza addressed the graduates as the guest speaker.

The graduates dedicated this ceremony to autism awareness and made a donation in the name of the class of January 2009 to the Little Miracles Preschool for Autism. The class members also wore flowers with an autism awareness ribbon.

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**Nursing Pinning Ceremony**

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When Isen Robbins ’91, ’93, son of CSI Engineering and Physics Professor Irv Robbins, left Tottenville High School to come to CSI, he decided to study psychology. That plan soon became sidetracked after he took an elective class in filmmaking.

Robbins recalls, “I’d done a lot of high school plays with my interest in drama, and I love movies. I decided that it would be fun to take an elective class with Buddy Giovinazzo at CSI. Buddy put a camera in my hand, which is the first time that I held a Super 8 camera, and, as I held it in my hand, it felt a lot like a hammer, like a tool… I felt for the power of the camera very quickly at that moment and I think within a week, changed my major to Cinema. He introduced me to the indie spirit, which I got at the College of Staten Island, that you can be from anywhere and anybody you can be an absolute nobody in the film industry, but you have the power in yourself to accomplish whatever it is you want to accomplish, which is an unfolding lesson that I’m still learning.”

After he earned a Bachelor’s degree in Cinema from CSI, Robbins continued on to pursue a Master’s degree in the subject at the College, but decided mid-stream, to switch to New York University (NYU). Although he says that NYU was “an
Brother to Brother
Toronto, Berlin, Venice, and Tribeca.
prestigious film festivals like Sundance, amount of recognition, with premieres at
(Hellboy) Perlman, to name a few. Intrinsic
Chloë Sevigny, Dominic Monaghan, and Ron
Strathairn, Marc Rufalo, Andrew McCarthy,
Danny Glover, Eliza Dushku, David
Hebrew Hammer, and
films, including
date, Intrinsic Value has produced over 20
and international sales, and finance. “To
production and post production, domestic
development and packaging, physical
Intrinsic Value”is active in script
and the company’s Website notes that
and, lately, genre thrillers of high quality,
Intrinsic Value Films in 1997 with his
development, launching
Intrinsic Value Films in 1997 with his
colleague Aimee School. The duo set out to
produce low-budget, mostly arthouse films
and, lately, genre thrillers of high quality,
and the company’s Website notes that
Intrinsic Value “is active in script
development and packaging, physical
production and post production, domestic
and international sales, and finance.” To
date, Intrinsic Value has produced over 20
films, including Brother to Brother, The
Hebrew Hammer, and XX/XY. Robbins
has worked with stars such as Eartha Kitt,
Danny Glover,Hiera Dubhka, David
Strathairn, Marc Rufalo, Andrew McCarthy,
Chlöe Sevygny, Dominic Monaghan, and Ron
(Hellboy) Perlman, to name a few. Intrinsic
Value films have also gained a considerable
amount of recognition, with premiers at
prestigious film festivals like Sundance,
Toronto, Berlin, Venice, and Tribeca.
Brother to Brother was also nominated for
four Indie Spirit Awards. This year Intrinsic
has had two films distributed in theaters, in
January The Alphabet Killer by Anchor Bay, and in May The Shep’tic, by IFC Films.
(Alphabet) and Red Giant’s objective is
“to develop and produce original, comic-
book- and novel-based science fiction
properties for studio distribution, including
and Webisode digital content.” Robbins
says that among the works that
Red Giant will bring to film are the Deepak
Chopra series The Angel Is Near and The
Lords of Light under the title The 36.
Now that he has forged a successful career
in cinema, what does Robbins find most
rewarding about the path that he has
chosen? “There’s a bunch of things that I
really like about what I do for a living. One
of them is that it’s extremely rare that a day
seems familiar to another. Every day is
different, a whole new set of challenges and
triiumphs, and victories, and defeats. There’s
a tremendous amount of new experience
coming at me, always. I like being
independent. If things happen in my world,
they happen because of me or one of my
partners. I love movies, too, and always
have, and feel that the medium we’re
working in is one of the most powerful,
creative tools on the planet and can be
used for a lot of different reasons, both
good and bad.”

Keeping Tabs

CALLING ALL ALUMNI!
Did you recently?....

• Change careers
• Land a new job
• Get married
• Have a baby
• Adopt a child
• Relocate
• Win an award
• Start a business
• Travel to a faraway destination
• or do you just have some piece of
news you’d like to share with our
alumni family?

Turning to the importance of the messages
that he and his partners impart, Robbins
adds, “We’ve taken on some of the
characteristics of the shaman, telling stories
that move and change the world a little bit.
Entertaining is really important too. I love
telling a good yarn just for the sake of it. I
like moving people.”

Recalling one instance of moving someone,
Robbins says that, after a screening of The
Sticky Fingers of Time at Venice, a woman
approached him in tears, which he found
odd because the film was about time travel.
She told him that the movie had such an
impact on her that she had intended to
commit suicide before she saw the film, but
now she had changed her mind because of
her viewing experience.

What does the future hold for Robbins?
Intrinsic Value and Red Giant Media will
continue to produce and distribute, but,
Robbins notes, things will be on a wider
scale than before, with larger budgets and
bigger audiences.

ALUMNI TOUR THE MET
with Fran D’Atria

Once again, alumni and artist Fran D’Atria Romano ’70 led a
special tour at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York
City for CSI alumni and friends. The Egyptian Galleries were
featured this year with discussions centering on the art, culture,
and history of the era, beginning with the Mastaba Tomb of
Perneb and ending with the Temple of Dendur. Fran was able
to add her own personal stories, having recently returned from
a trip to Egypt. Hearing these stories was a definite highlight of
the evening and made this tour more special.
Until just recently, CSI senior and Biochemistry/Chemistry major Saadyah Averick faced a tough choice. Prior to his graduation last May, he had to decide whether he wanted to attend Carnegie Mellon, Tufts, Penn State, Brown, Case Western University, or University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Ultimately, he decided on Carnegie Mellon.

Recalling the role that his CSI education played in creating this bevy of choices, Averick notes, “The education I received at CSI has enabled me to be exposed to subjects and concepts that are essential for graduate school and has allowed me to understand various and complex subjects presented by professors at the graduate schools that I visited. The experience I have gained in the laboratory has yielded a publication in a prestigious chemical journal and this was of great importance in my application and acceptance to graduate school."

Averick’s mentor, Dr. Krishnaswami Raja, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at CSI, calls him “the best undergraduate researcher I have encountered in my career as a scientist” and adds that “he is full of creative ideas, which are workable, and is passionate about chemistry; a rare trait in an undergraduate.”

Averick admits that his “love of all things outdoor and scientific” gained him a reputation as a “science kid” when he was younger. In fact, he declared a Biology major when he first arrived at CSI, with the intent of becoming a doctor. Things eventually changed, however. “Though my love of the biological sciences developed early in my life,” Averick explains, “I only discovered my passion for chemistry later on in my college career. When I began to conduct research in Dr. Raja’s laboratory, I was fortunate enough to meet Dr. Raja in my General Chemistry 1 class. During the course of the
The story of former CSI Chemistry major and current grad Chen Ming (Benjamin) Hui is one of perseverance and commitment, and one of great success. He has recently reported that he has gained acceptance to Doctoral Chemistry programs at Carnegie Mellon University, Stony Brook University, Binghamton University, and Temple University, and Brook University, Binghamton University, and Temple University, but he faced many obstacles on his road to success.

Benjamin came to the United States from Hong Kong at the age of 17, barely able to speak English and unfamiliar with U.S. culture, but with a hope to someday find a cure for smallpox. The death of his father from cancer eventually energized his goal of pursuing a career in science. Benjamin recalls that his father was skilled in engineering, particularly when it came to fixing electronics in his family’s home, but his father never received a college education because he had to work to support his family. After his father’s death, Benjamin eventually came to realize that his own “tirelessness, studiousness, and intelligence” were inherited from his father and that he would want him to use his talent to help people, instead of growing. Therefore, he promised to save people from illness, and help everyone stay healthy. That’s why I am interested in researching in chemistry and medical technology.

Eventually, Benjamin, who gained experience in engineering in his teens at a computer company, began a research project in the summer semester of 2006, Inderpreet Averick says, “Benjamin recalls, “During the summer semester of 2006, I began a research project in chemistry, namely, the synthesis of unique protein-polymer hybrids for avian imaging and drug delivery. This project involves the synthesis of polymers, the functionalization of the polymers, and their subsequent conjugation to proteins.” His work in the lab has also focused on helping to acclimate new students to the research environment and teaching them how they can gain the most out of college,” as well as teaching and tutoring Chemistry students.

Now that his time at CSI is at an end, Averick notes that he looks forward to graduate school to strengthen his knowledge and understanding of chemistry and its applications in life. PhD training will grant me access to various skills necessary for success in the industrial and academic worlds. The years spent in pursuit of my PhD will expose me to many unique scientific problems. I will gain the knowledge and problem-solving skills that I will need as a future researcher. Most importantly, I feel that through chemistry I can help improve the quality of life and the environment – which we live by creating new and useful materials.”

CSI GRADS RECEIVE PASSPORT FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES

CS1 President Dr. Tomás Morales told 2,263 students at the College of Staten Island that “the degree you receive may say ‘College of Staten Island,’ but it has the power to take you anywhere you want to go. It is a passport for the rest of your life.”

The student speaker, Besim Mehmedovic, who graduated with a Baccalaureate degree in Science, Letters, and Society with high honors, also earned his New York State Teaching License in Elementary Education.

Beyond his academic achievements, he is a veteran of the United States Air Force and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and has earned the Air Force Achievement Medal for outstanding achievement and/or meritorious service.

In his heartfelt speech, Mehmedovic called “the current economic climate...the prime issue that faces our graduating class,” but he called on his fellow graduates to view the challenges that the depressed financial situation brings as opportunities—“the opportunity to see what we are made of...the opportunity to rediscover what is most important in life...and the opportunity to think of our lives in comparison to others around the world” who have far less than we do.

While acknowledging the success of the students’ accomplishments, President Morales acknowledged the CSI faculty for their “extraordinary scholarship and research,” and how their high academic caliber has attracted more funding and recognition from state and federal agencies. Describing CSI as an institution on the move, with graduates “going on to the most prestigious graduate and professional schools,” Dr. Morales highlighted the College’s record enrollment of 13,000 and improved infrastructure, with such innovations as the new High-Performance Computational and Visualization Center and the shuttlebus that runs between the Staten Island Ferry and the CSI campus.

In addition to the presentation of the degrees to CSI students, Dr. Morales and Dr. William Fritz, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, bestowed the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities to those who have made outstanding contributions in their respective fields. Lady Borton, the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities to those who have made outstanding contributions in their respective fields. Lady Borton,
Making the World a More Beautiful Place

Elena Solitario’s Pilo Arts Day Spa Helps People to Relax and It Gives Back to the Community

CSI alumna Elena Solitario ’83 has a long journey to her present-day career as co-owner and president of Pilo Arts Day Spa in Brooklyn. She came to the United States from Italy in 1955 and studied cosmetology at Clara Barton High School because she had a good grasp of the English language. Solitario recalls that she wanted to pursue a college degree, but she accepted an offer to become a partner in a salon, instead. While she ran the salon during the day, Solitario eventually enrolled at the College of Staten Island to study economics, part-time. Remembering her experience at CSI, Solitario says, "I was extremely happy with [my education at CSI]. Most of my professors were people in the business world and they did this at night and they came with richness and experience in the topic. So, majoring in economics gave me an idea of how the monetary world works. I feel very fortunate because my professors gave me an understanding of how everything affects the economy and how you can battle it or reinvent yourself. It gives you a tremendous understanding of the business world, which is so needed in business, especially small business.”

Solitario used that knowledge to open the Pilo Arts Day Spa in 1978, along with her partner from her first salon, Paul Pastore. Since that time, Pilo Arts has gained admission into a number of prestigious associations, such as the International Spa Association, Intercoiffure, a world-renowned spa organization; and Salon TODAY 200, receiving recognition as one of the top 200 North American spas.

One of her goals in opening this full-service day spa, according to Solitario, was to help women, who, at that time were increasingly finding themselves in the workforce, as families had to rely on two incomes to maintain their standard of living. “When we opened, women were going back to the workforce and they had many jobs—their job, the rearing of their children, taking care of the household, and even though the husbands contribute somewhat to taking care of those things, it [still mostly falls to the women]. I wanted to create a place where, for one or two hours, someone could say, ‘Would you like a glass of water or a cup of coffee?’ and someone is doing something for you to relax and de-stress. When we opened, that was the beginning of women really going into the workforce and I felt that. I felt that it was a change and it was something that we could do for them. Of course, later, it became men and women, but it was predominantly to give women the feeling of someone doing something for them.”

Beyond helping women to relax and feel pampered, Solitario has been extremely charitable through her business, donating services, such as a day of beauty (including a massage and makeover) and hair stylings to area charities so that they may raise funds by offering the services as door or raffle prizes.

A personal experience when she was young helped to reinforce the importance of giving back. “When I first came from Italy, I got a phone call from the [American] Cancer Society to go around on my block and ask for donations. It was such a humiliating experience because people look at you and say ‘Okay, who is this girl who could hardly speak English?’ and I’m asking for money for this organization. I remember that I collected $17.50, she says with a chuckle. ‘I realized,’ Solitario continues, ‘that this was a good cause, but people are skeptical about giving. So when we opened our doors, because all of our clients are involved in different organizations, I couldn’t give them money because I just couldn’t afford it, I decided to give them a service so that it could be affordable. Also because I realize the importance of it and how they get doors closed right in front of their eyes when they go asking, I promised myself that I would never turn anybody away. I would never give them the feeling that I had when people didn’t give me anything.’”

The College of Staten Island has been one of the many beneficiaries of Solitario’s good works, as she has donated numerous days of beauty to the College over the years, including to last spring’s Nursing reunion, and gift certificates for services, as she did for this year’s CSI Foundation Golf Outing, and as graduation gifts to students who received diplomas from CSI. She has also partnered with the CSI Alumni Association over the last three years to host “Spring into Beauty” spa events that treat attendees to a night of pampering. In recognition of her generous support of the College, CSI recognized Solitario with a College Award in 2005. Going beyond her experience with the American Cancer Society, Solitario discusses a revelation about what is really important giving back. “I realized the importance of what a community really is. How could you tell one of your clients who’s doing such fabulous work that you’re not going to donate? I realize the importance of what they’re doing because a neighborhood is as good as its people. If all these people are involved in charitable work and doing good things for the neighborhood, that means the neighborhood is going to stay sound and people are taking care of each other.”

I was extremely happy with [my education at CSI].
The College of Staten Island Department of Nursing and the CSI Alumni Association hosted CSI Nursing graduates, faculty, past and present, and staff to celebrate all generations of CSI nurses on May 12, the last day of National Nurses Week and, coincidentally, the birthday of nurse Florence Nightingale. The evening honored the 25th Anniversary of the Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, 42 years of the Associate in Applied Science, and seven years of the Master of Science degree in Nursing at CSI.

Dr. Mary O’Donnell, Chairperson of the Nursing Department, remarked, “Everybody that I speak to tonight is thanking us for doing this…everyone is thrilled. It’s wonderful…we are so happy about it!” She was not alone; most of the 255 guests who attended the reception at Li Greci’s Staaten, felt the same way, as did Peg Kittle, who graduated in the Class of 1984. “I owe CSI everything,” she said. “It opened up a whole new world for me and started me down a path I never expected. I entered college at age 43, with six children. CSI has given me something that has lasted to this day; I have learned so much, and it has kept me going.”

Current faculty provided updates on various programs for the attendees. Dr. Arlene Farren, Deputy Chair of the Nursing Department, spoke for the department; Dr. Margaret Lunney ’73 discussed the Master’s in Nursing; Dr. Eileen Gigliotti represented the Doctor of Science in Nursing; and Dr. Marianne Jeffreys gave an update on the Cultural Competency in Nursing program.

Alumni enjoyed a decadent buffet dinner, great raffle prizes, and a 50/50 drawing, but most importantly the company of their fellow classmates and professors. Since this had been the first nursing reunion at CSI, many guests admitted that they were nervous about attending and wondered if they would run into old friends. However, many of the guests remarked on how happy they were to be there. Beth Bilsenback, from the Class of 1976, stated, “I was the last class to graduate before the merger between Richmond College and Staten Island Community College. CSI’s predecessor schools. I have been trying to reconnect with old friends and acquaintances, and even just the air of camaraderie among the nursing alumni made the event a true success.”

Dr. Gail Simmons, Dean of Science and Technology, had the privilege of speaking about the Joanne D’Amato ’67 Nursing Scholarship Fund. This scholarship was recently established by the family of Joanne D’Amato and they were present at the dinner that evening.

A wonderful evening was had by all; people enjoyed themselves right up until the very end. The excitement of reconnecting with old friends and acquaintances, and even just the air of camaraderie among the nursing alumni made the event a true success.
Alumni Association Hosts
ALUMNI STIMULUS PACKAGE

In light of the tough economic times that many Americans face today, the CSI Alumni Association hosted an evening for its members and friends to offer them some help in the job market. The event’s host, nationally recognized motivational speaker Eric Barron, shared his techniques and tips for interviewing and marketing oneself in today’s job climate.

Barron offered advice to the attendees so that they could better define who they are and how to brand themselves, while emphasizing the importance of networking and using the Internet to help in the job search. The interactive event energized the audience. Irene Liang felt “grateful” for this presentation and she learned new techniques that she attended. After Barron’s presentation, Phil Jonas, the Alumni Career Coach, was introduced. Mr. Jonas was available last semester to help alumni with employment and career concerns.

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CSI SWIMMERS Do It Again at Nationals

Dreams came true, records were broken, and new goals were set as three of the College of Staten Island’s finest male swimmers participated in the 2009 NCAA Division III Swimming and Diving Championship at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center in Minneapolis, MN in mid-March. Pavel Buyanov took his third national championship after making history last year with the first-ever national championship win for the College of Staten Island since it became a four-year Division III institution in 1976. Buyanov was of Staten Island since it became a four-year national championship win for the College.

In a preliminary race that had just a four-second difference from top to bottom time, defending champion Buyanov came up on top for the 100-meter breaststroke. In the medal round, Buyanov touched the wall with a time of 54.27, taking his third gold medal and breaking his own NCAA record from last year. The following day, he placed third in the 200-meter breaststroke with a time of 1:59.99.

Romanov participated in the 2009 NCAA Division III Swimming and Diving Championship at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center in Minneapolis, MN in mid-March. Pavel Buyanov took his third national championship after making history last year with the first-ever national championship win for the College of Staten Island since it became a four-year Division III institution in 1976. Buyanov was of Staten Island since it became a four-year national championship win for the College.

Romanov started at the age of 16 for the dream of swimming in the U.S. when he was 19 years old. Romanov left behind his family and friends at the age of 16 for the dream of swimming in this country. In a preliminary race that had just a four-second difference from top to bottom time, defending champion Buyanov came up on top for the 100-meter breaststroke. In the medal round, Buyanov touched the wall with a time of 54.27, taking his third gold medal and breaking his own NCAA record from last year. The following day, he placed third in the 200-meter breaststroke with a time of 1:59.99.

CSI HONORS STUDENT-ATHLETES with Annual Gala

The College of Staten Island honored a host of its student-athletes, coaches, and distinguished staff members with its annual Athletics Awards Banquet held at the Sports and Recreation Center on May 22. A total of over 70 award winners were highlighted as part of the gala, among them members of CSI’s 15 intercollegiate sports teams in 2008-2009.

After greetings from Interim Athletic Director David Pizzuto, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs Michael Daniels and CSI President Dr. Tomás D. Morales, awards were given for each sport an chronological order beginning with teams last fall, and ending with women’s softball, which finalized its season by celebrating a CUNYAC championship. Major awards were then presented to Female Athlete of the Year Nicole Estrada, a senior on both the women’s basketball and softball teams. Entrada was a CUNYAC all-star every season in both sports during her career at CSI. She scored a game-high 25 points against Lehman College, helping the team to clinch its first-ever ECAC Championship, and she was named Most Valuable Player in the CUNYAC Softball Tournament, helping CSI to clinch its fourth conference title in six years.

Men’s tennis ace Konstantin Trofimovich was named Male Athlete of the Year. Trofimovich finished an impeccable junior campaign by posting an 11-0 singles record, never relinquishing a set along the way, helping CSI to nail down its first CUNYAC Regular Season Championship since 1999.

CSI Scholar-Athlete of the Year honors were given to soccer star and senior Fiusa Begai. A CUNYAC soccer champion in every year that she played, Begai sported a 3.85 GPA, majoring in History and Adolescent Education. The senior is CSI’s all-time career leader in goals scored, assists, and shots taken. She was ranked 19th nationally in scoring in 2007, and was named a CUNYAC/Hospital for Special Surgery Scholar-Athlete of the Month in 2008.

Tina Bellochiro, a senior on both the women’s soccer and basketball teams, was awarded the Fourth Annual Bill Cali/John Scrivani Sportsmanship Award, named after CSI’s baseball skippers who earned similar honors from the Staten Island Advance in 2005.

Throughout the course of the evening, other notable awards were handed out. Distinguished Service to Athletics awards were given to Jason Fein, former Director of Athletics at the College; Erika Hellstrom, principal fundraising coordinator for athletics through the CSI Foundation; and Marianne McLaughlin of the CSI Association for her tireless dedication to working with the athletics administration on budget concerns. Klepp Flooring’s John Mc Crudden was also honored for his assistance in CSI’s purchase and installation of its current temporary gym floor.

The CSI academic year came to a close with Commencement on Thursday, May 28. At the Honors Convocation, which took place on Tuesday, May 26, graduating seniors Nick Levintov (Men’s Swimming) and Begai were named Male and Female Athletes of the Year, respectively.

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Apart from the actual ceremony, members of the CSI Student-Athlete Advisory Committee presented their inaugural SAAC Inspiration Award, given this year to Interim Vice President Michael Daniels. In sum, the evening was a great success, according to Pizzuto, who assumed director duties in late August 2008. “The athletics year went by with such a blur, but we have a lot to be proud of,” he said. “Tonight is a night we get to take in all of those accomplishments and give them their proper due. This is the highlight to our athletics year, and to see it so well attended by students, coaches, and the esteemed staff and administration is terrific.”

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The College of Staten Island men’s baseball team was on the down side of a 7-6 decision at the hands of Monroe Community College for the Sixth Annual Grace Hillery Breast Cancer Awareness Night on May 6, but the real winner was the money raised in the name Mrs. Grace Hillery for the Staten Island Breast Cancer Research Initiative, which totaled at more than $5,400, the highest ever in the event’s six-year history.

What made the event even more remarkable was that the game was halted after only seven innings with rain spoiling the final two innings.

Originating in 2004, the special evening serves to honor the memory of Grace Hillery, mother to former CSI student-athlete and baseball star Anthony Hillery, who passed away from the illness prior to the 2004 baseball season. Hillery went on to play for the Dolphins through the 2005 campaign and has since graduated CSI with a degree in History and Education. He is currently a teacher and baseball coach at New Dorp High School.

CSI SALUTES BILL CALI with Number Retirement

In September of 2008, 14-year head baseball coach Bill Cali announced his retirement. As the College of Staten Island’s most beloved and winningest coach, the staff, team, and coaches decided to do something big in his honor. On April 19, in a pre-game ceremony, Cali was surrounded by his family, his former players, the CSI Athletics Program, and Baseball Program, along with CSI President Dr. Tomás Morales. Everyone helped Cali to unveil his retired jersey and a baseball-shaped sign with his name and number that was to be displayed on the centerfield wall of the CSI Baseball Complex. The number 6 worn by Cali over the past 14 years will never be assigned to anyone else on the CSI baseball team.

The longest-tenured coach in CSI baseball history, Cali’s list of accomplishments gathered with each passing year his teams tallied 20+ wins eight times, playing in the CUNYAC championship game in 13 out of his 14 coaching years. CSI teams played in five ECAC tournaments during his tenure and the 2001 championship team was the last to win an ECAC title at the College. In a fitting end, CSI rallied in a pair of thrilling one-run victories to win another CUNY title in 2008, wresting the championship away from defending champs John Jay College.

Like he had promised after announcing his retirement, Cali attended just about every game during the 2009 season to cheer on his Dolphins. “I must thank the College for giving me the opportunity to work at one of my passions for the last 14 years,” said the humbled Cali at the event.

CSI Foundation ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

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NEW VICE PRESIDENT for Institutional Advancement and External Affairs

College of Staten Island President Dr. Tomás Morales has announced the appointment of Barbara R. Eschoo as the new Vice President for Institutional Advancement and External Affairs at the College of Staten Island, effective June 15, 2009, following a nationwide search and extensive campus participation.

Ms. Eschoo received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theater from New England College. She participated in training programs through the National Society of Fundraising Executives and is an active member of various professional associations including the Association of Fundraising Professionals (now, the American Association of Fundraising Professionals), and the American Council on Education, Office of Women where she represented Connecticut.

“Congratulations on the outstanding work of the search committee chaired by Vice President Milton Santiago,” Dr. Morales said. “The committee’s diligence and insight produced an impressive pool of applicants, and its hard work assured a successful outcome of this important search. I especially want to thank the College community for its participation and feedback, for giving its valuable time in support of the search for this important position.”

SECOND ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL Promises a Day of Family-Friendly Fun

After its successful inaugural year, the CSI Foundation will hold its Second Annual Fall Festival on the Great Lawn of the College of Staten Island. The event, which will be held on Saturday, October 5 from 11:00am to 4:00pm, will feature a wide assortment of vendors, live entertainment, and raffles. The proceeds benefitting the Staten Island Breast Cancer Initiative.

It will be a great way for the community to get together, have fun, and support an important cause.

For more information, call the CSI Office of Institutional Advancement at 718.982.2365.

Alumni Answer the Call for SPRING 2009 PHONATHON

Each year, CSI conducts a phonathon, in both fall and spring, on behalf of our Annual Fund, to raise much-needed dollars to assist our students with scholarships and research stipends. And to support new library acquisitions and much more.

Last spring, student and staff callers took to the phones, under the enthusiastic supervision of Debra Santilli-Barone, who is an experienced caller of previous phonathons. Santilli-Barone knows first-hand how important raising Annual Fund dollars is for our students’ education. As a scholarship recipient (during her undergraduate days), I am grateful for the generosity of our alumni. If it weren’t for their pledges, my fellow students and I would find it hard to continue our education. My enjoyment comes from training new callers, watching their delight when they obtain a donation, and by being part of making CSI a success.

The phonathon effort spanned nine nights during April and May, raising close to $12,000. While many alumni give each year when they are called, it is always a bonus when first-time alumni donors pledge to help. This spring 86 new donors joined our ranks in making a difference for our students. What impressed us as student and staff callers most was that even new alumni, some just starting in careers, gave what they could. Our student and staff callers especially enjoy contacting a wide spectrum of our alumni—getting to know what’s new with them, while letting them know what’s new on campus.

Pledges made to the CSI Annual Fund contribute so much and we thank our alumni for the legacy they give to a new generation of students. It’s never too late to make a donation. For more information about how to donate to the Annual Fund to benefit our students, please contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at 718.982.2365.

CSI Alumni Association

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

• NEW! Alumni Online Community
  www.csialumniatlarge.org
  Create your profile, post on the message board, submit a class note, register for events, and learn what’s new with fellow alumni and your alma mater! For first-time log-on information, contact the Alumni Relations Office at 718.982.2290 or alumni@mail.csi.cuny.edu.

• Educational, cultural, social, and athletic programs and events throughout the year.

• Home base for alumni connections
  Connect with professional associates, faculty, classmates, and friends.

• Library privileges
  Present your CSI AA permanent alumni photo ID membership card at the College Library for access and borrowing privileges.

• Visitor pass for parking
  Present your CSI AA permanent alumni photo ID to the security guard at the entrance for your pass.

• Career Center
  Continued service and access for alumni presenting permanent CSI AA photo ID. Résumés, career counseling, interview skills, and job databank. Call 718.982.3161.

• 25% tuition discount for courses offered by the Office of Continuing Education and Professional Development
  For course information and to register, call 718.982.2182.

• CSI Sports and Recreation Center alumni discount membership
  Present your permanent alumni photo ID for discount. For more information, contact the membership desk, 718.982.3161.

• CSI Center for the Arts ticket discount
  Receive a $2 alumni discount for CSA performances (limit two per ID per performance). For information about upcoming shows, contact the box office at 718.982.ARTS/2787.

• Barnes & Noble CSI College Bookstore 10% alumni discount
  Present permanent alumni photo ID for applicable items (excludes textbooks).

• Bank of America MasterCard/Visa
  Call 800.847.1778 and indicate that you are an alumnus/alumna of the College of Staten Island for applicable credit card offer. Telephone Priority Code: FABHR4

• Auto and homeowner insurance program
  through Liberty Mutual Savings Plan/American Insurance Administrators. Call 800.524.9000. Follow the prompts, and indicate that you are an alumnus/alumna of the College of Staten Island.

• Group term life insurance and health insurance
  through NEATrust/American Insurance Administrators. Call 888.922.1245 and indicate that you are an alumnus/alumna of the College of Staten Island. For a complete listing of programs and availability in your state, visit www.alumninsurancesprogram.com/csi.

• NEW! CSI Alumni Association Student Code of Ethics
  www.csialumniatlarge.org
  Code of Ethics for students, new donors, and admitted students. For more information, contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at 718.982.2365.
Thank you Professor Gordon DiPaolo and Lorraine DiPaolo for making Commencement a reality for many of our students. Look for an article on the DiPaolo’s good works in the next issue.