



Academic Excellence
Social Commitment

CUNY

BELLE ZELLER
Scholarship Trust Fund

Friend of CUNY and Salute Our Scholars
September 12, 2023



ABOUT DR. BELLE ZELLER AND THE BELLE ZELLER SCHOLARSHIP

Belle Zeller, Professor Emerita of political science and a scholar of the legislative process, was an indomitable leader of organizations representing City University of New York faculty and staff for more than thirty years.

From 1944 until 1972, Dr. Zeller was the chair of the Legislative Conference, a lobbying group that later became the first union to represent the permanent faculty in the City University system. In 1972, the Conference merged with the United Federation of College Teachers, a rival union representing part-time instructors. For the next four years, Dr. Zeller was president of the joint union, the Professional Staff Congress.

In 1979, when Dr. Zeller retired, she asked that in lieu of a party or gifts, the PSC establish the Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund for students with demonstrated academic achievement and service to their community. This scholarship is intended to honor the unique qualities of Belle Zeller: the combination of social commitment and scholarship.

Since its establishment, the Fund has awarded more than 350 scholarships to CUNY students from community and senior colleges as well as CUNY's graduate, professional, and law schools. These students all maintain a GPA of 3.75, are enrolled full-time, and devote their time to significant community service. Belle Zeller Scholars receive a scholarship award of \$5,000.



PROGRAM

Welcome

Manfred Philipp, MC
Lehman College and The Graduate Center

Greetings

Karol V. Mason, President
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

James Davis, President
PSC-CUNY

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Chancellor
City University of New York

Friend of CUNY Awards

Hon. Carl E. Heastie, Speaker
New York State Assembly

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins,
Majority Leader, New York State Senate

Distinguished Leadership in Education

Randi Weingarten, President
American Federation of Teachers

Lifetime Achievement Awards

Raymond Paretzky
1981 Belle Zeller Scholar
Partner at McDermott Will and Emery

Matthew Sapienza, Chief Financial Officer
American Council of Learned Societies
Former Senior Vice Chancellor, CUNY

2023 Belle Zeller Awards

Robert Cermele, Treasurer
PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund
Professor, City Tech (Retired)

Susan DiRaimo, Lecturer



SALUTE TO SCHOLARS

Lehman College and City College

2023 Scholars

Rae Ellis, CUNY School of Law
Sumaya Kabir, Queens College, Queensborough CC
Nawel Messaoudi, Kingsborough CC, BMCC
Nora Rajeh, Lehman College, Hostos CC
Beth Roco, Brooklyn College, Kingsborough CC, Baruch College
Taylor Holden, The Graduate Center, Hunter College

2022 Scholars

Martin Castro, BMCC
Kamalpreet K. Chohan, CUNY School of Law
Jannathul Ferdous Chowdhury, Hunter College
Timone S. Eskaros, Baruch College
Aaryan M. Nair, New York City College of Technology
Nana Wiafe Addae Owusu, BMCC
Andres S. Besserer Rayas, The Graduate Center
Itay Rubin, New York City College of Technology

2021 Scholars

Samantha Escobar, BMCC
Jenna Fiorentino, City College of New York
Ahona Islam, Queens College
Zahra Jamil, Brooklyn College
Shilpa Jindia, CUNY School of Law
Sindy Kalauch, Hunter College
Gauri Khanna, Baruch College
Andrea Nicktee Juarez Mendoza, The Graduate Center
Kristen L. Miller, The Graduate Center
Manav Tilwani, Baruch College
Syed Muhammad Shahmir Zaidi, City College of New York



MENU

Vietnamese Summer Rolls

Fine Julienne Vegetables, Tamari/Ginger Sauce

Stuffed Mushrooms with Melted Brie

Warm Roasted Asparagus in Phyllo Cups

Bruschetta on Crostini and Macadamia Pesto

Charcuterie Board

Filet Mignon Medallions and Argentinian Chimichurri Sauce

Jumbo Shrimp Cavatelli Active Station

Steamed Jumbo Shrimp Sauteed in Clarified Butter, Garlic,
Fine Chopped Parsley, Chardonnay and Sprinkled with Parmigiano Reggiano

Bowtie Pasta Salad

Mini Mozzarella Balls, Arugula, Red Grape Tomatoes
in Balsamic Vinaigrette

Salmon Pinwheels with Capers

Jamaican Curry Beef Patties

Chicken Satay with Sweet Chili Sauce

Artisan Breadbasket

Sweet Bites

Carrot Cake Squares
Dark Chocolate Ganache Brownies
Key Lime Tarts

Beverages

Wine

Red, White, Rose

Sparkling/Still Water with lemon/lime wedges

Coffee/Decaf/Tea



WELCOME



**Manfred Philipp,
Managing Director**

Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund
Lehman College and
The Graduate Center (retired)



**Jewel Escobar,
Chair**

Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund
New York City
College of Technology (retired)



**Karol V. Mason,
President**
John Jay College of
Criminal Justice



**James Davis,
President**
PSC - CUNY



**Félix V. Matos Rodríguez,
Chancellor**
City University of New York



Friend of CUNY Hon. Carl E. Heastie, Speaker New York State Assembly



Carl E. Heastie is the 100th Speaker of the New York State Assembly. He represents the 83rd Assembly District in the northeast Bronx and was first elected in 2000. He has the historic distinction of being the first African American to serve as Speaker. Since February 3, 2015, he has led the Assembly Majority in efforts to uplift communities and promote a Families First agenda that prioritizes strategic investments in the health, safety, and the economic and social well-being of New York's families.

Heastie is a lifelong advocate for workers' rights and successfully enacted a graduated plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 and delivered paid family leave to working families.

Speaker Heastie is a passionate advocate for the transformative power of education. Since he became Speaker, the Assembly Majority has secured more than \$6.2 billion in additional school aid funding and established community schools that provide students with holistic, wrap-around services, including healthcare, social services, mental health, and afterschool programming to promote the well-being of students alongside their academic success. Heastie strengthened the Assembly's longstanding commitment to supporting high-quality public education by creating the Higher Education Road to Success, providing a more than 40 percent increase in funding support for opportunity programs that help thousands of low- and middle-income families afford a college education.

Under his leadership, New York became the first state in the nation to implement President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative to overcome challenges and improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.

Under Speaker Heastie's leadership, New York has ushered in reforms to lead the criminal justice system into the 21st century. The Assembly Majority raised the age of adult criminal responsibility, strengthened New York's indigent legal defense program, eliminated cash bail for most misdemeanor and non-violent felony defenses, reformed speedy trial provisions, and updated the state's regressive discovery laws to prevent wrongful convictions and improve efficiencies.

Strengthening New York's democratic process, the Assembly Majority passed a package of legislation in 2019 to reform New York State's electoral process, expanding New Yorkers' access to the polls and bringing more transparency to campaign finance.

To address skyrocketing rents across the state, the Assembly Majority fought tirelessly to pass legislation extending and strengthening rent protections for tenants across New York.

Leading the way in protecting our environment, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act was passed in 2019. This comprehensive legislation sets critical environmental standards, including reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the use of renewable energy in order to address and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Prior to joining the Assembly, Speaker Heastie served as a budget analyst in the New York City Comptroller's office. He earned a master's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance from Baruch College (CUNY) and a bachelor's degree in applied mathematics and statistics from Stony Brook University (SUNY).



Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader
NY State Senate



New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins has been widely recognized as a trailblazer in local and state government, and a champion for progressive action.

In 2012, Senator Stewart-Cousins became the first woman—and the first African American woman—to lead a New York State legislative conference. In 2019 she again made history and shattered the glass ceiling when her peers elected her as Temporary President and Majority Leader of the State Senate.

First elected to the State Senate in 2006, Senator Stewart-Cousins currently represents Greenburgh, Mount Pleasant, and Yonkers. She has overseen the passage of historic and transformative legislation on issues including voting reforms, gun safety, women's rights and health care, immigration, the LGBTQ community, the justice system, climate change legislation, and the strongest tenant protections and affordable housing package in state history.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins earned her Bachelor of Science Degree from Pace University and her teaching credentials in Business Education from Lehman College. She earned her Master of Public Administration from Pace University.





Randi Weingarten, President American Federation of Teachers



A Union of Professionals

Randi Weingarten is president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO), a union of 1.7 million teachers; paraprofessionals and school-related personnel; higher education faculty and staff; nurses and other healthcare professionals; local, state and federal government employees; and early childhood educators. The AFT is dedicated to the belief that every person in America deserves the freedom to thrive, fueled by opportunity, justice, and a voice in our democracy.

Prior to her election as AFT president in 2008, Weingarten served for eleven years as president of the United Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2, representing approximately 200,000 educators in the New York City public school system, as well as home childcare providers and other workers in health, law, and education. Weingarten taught history at Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood from 1991 to 1997, and she helped her students win several state and national awards debating constitutional issues.

Weingarten was included in Washingtonian's 2021 Washington's Most Influential People, and in 2013, the New York Observer named Weingarten one of the most influential New Yorkers of the past 25 years.

Weingarten holds degrees from Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Cardozo School of Law. She worked as a lawyer for the Wall Street firm of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan from 1983 to 1986. She is an active member of the Democratic National Committee and numerous professional, civic, religious, and philanthropic organizations.





Raymond Paretzky
1981 Belle Zeller Scholar
Partner at McDermott Will
and Emery



Raymond Paretzky provides advisory services to clients in matters related to import relief measures, customs compliance, export controls, trade sanctions, and the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS).

With a wealth of experience, Raymond is well-versed in handling intricate international trade concerns for both U.S. and non-U.S. clients. He frequently aids U.S. importers in areas such as product classification, valuation, and other customs-related issues. This includes preparing prior disclosures and protests. Additionally, he guides and secures rulings and licenses for U.S. exporters dealing with export controls enforced by entities such as the U.S. State Department (overseeing International Traffic in Arms Regulations, or ITAR), the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS, overseeing Export Administration Regulations, or EAR), and the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

Raymond boasts notable expertise in every facet of U.S. antidumping proceedings that revolve around alleged undervalued product sales in the U.S. His representation covers both U.S. petitioners and foreign respondents. He has also defended U.S. companies accused of dumping in foreign markets. Some notable cases he has actively been involved in include disputes over ripe olives from Spain, DRAMs from Korea, steel nails from China, and MSG from Indonesia.

Raymond has effectively represented clients before various U.S. government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. International Trade Commission, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as well as federal courts, including the U.S. Court of International Trade and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

Paretzky's knowledge is also evident in his contributions as an author or co-author of articles on topics like the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) and other foreign policy matters. Before establishing his legal career, Raymond served as a law clerk to the Hon. Douglas P. Woodlock (D., Mass.) and held the role of articles editor at the Yale Journal of International Law. His academic background includes English Language and Literature studies at Oxford University, where he earned a Rhodes Scholarship.

Paretzky's commitment to pro bono work is demonstrated by his inclusion in the DC Bar Pro Bono Honor Roll for 2014. He has been recognized with the High Honor distinction and aids asylum seekers referred by McDermott pro bono partner Human Rights First.

His educational journey includes attending Yale Law School, where he earned his JD in 1988; the University of Oxford, where he received his BA/MA through a Rhodes Scholarship in 1985; and Queens College, where he graduated summa cum laude as Valedictorian in 1983 and received a Belle Zeller Scholarship in 1981.





Matthew Sapienza,
Chief Financial Officer
American Council of Learned Societies
Former Senior Vice Chancellor, CUNY



With a distinguished background of seventeen years in prominent leadership positions within one of the nation's most significant and intricate institutions of higher education, Matt brings alignment with our academic principles, a nuanced understanding of all facets of the educational realm, and a profound operational expertise in non-profit financial management and strategic planning.

Sapienza's most recent role encompassed serving as the Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer at the City University of New York (CUNY), where he dedicated seventeen years of service. In this capacity, he assumed responsibility for the oversight and administration of financial matters and institutional relationships across the University's 25 colleges and professional schools. His oversight extended to a comprehensive management of funds exceeding \$3 billion in state and city tax-supported operational resources, in addition to over \$1 billion in tuition-generated revenues. Furthermore, his purview included stewardship of the University's Long-Term Investment Pool, boasting an endowment exceeding \$300 million. He provided strategic leadership to critical units including the University Budget Office, the Office of the University Controller, and the Office of Treasury Services.

Prior to his tenure at CUNY, Sapienza held the position of Deputy Budget Director at the New York City Department of Education (DOE). His journey in public service commenced as a Senior Budget Analyst for the New York City Fire Department.

Sapienza earned a BBA in Finance from Pace University's Lubin School of Business, as well as an MBA in Finance from St. John's University.





**Robert Cermele, Treasurer
PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund
Professor, City Tech (Retired)**



Bob Cermele is a committed unionist and a math professor and former department chair at the New York City College of Technology, part of the City University of New York.

A member of the Professional Staff Congress, NYSUT's affiliate representing CUNY employees, Cermele has been an active union member since joining CUNY in 1972. He served as chapter chair for the American Association of University Professors before that chapter merged with the PSC in 1980.

Cermele has taken a leadership role in both campus and union affairs. He led a governance reform effort on the City Tech campus during the 1990s and was elected chapter chair of the campus's 1,000 PSC member chapter in 2001. He subsequently was reelected for four more three-year terms until his retirement in 2016.

Cermele, as treasurer of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund since 2003, played a lead role in restoring and maintaining the fund's financial health while at the same time enhancing member benefits.

On the City Tech campus, Cermele has won acclaim from union leaders for his unique ability to develop the leadership skills of his members. His outreach efforts have led to increased participation in union activities by chapter members.

During his tenure as chapter chair, Cermele also developed a labor/management committee to deal with campus health and safety and other pressing issues and led a thirteen-year effort to institute an equitable teaching load for college faculty.





Susan DiRaimo, Lecturer Lehman College and City College



The City College
of New York

Susan DiRaimo is an accomplished individual with a diverse range of experiences and achievements. Susan is an adjunct lecturer in the English Departments at both City College and Lehman College, where she teaches English Literature, Composition, Business Writing, and English as a Second Language. She has co-authored a book titled *Life, Language, and the Urban College Experience*.

She completed her master's degree at the National Autonomous University of Mexico City and pursued her Ph.D. work at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her thesis focused on Pablo Neruda, a renowned Chilean poet and diplomat.

Susan is involved with the Professional Staff Congress Executive Council, representing part-time personnel since 2003. She advocates for unemployment insurance for adjuncts and regularly testifies at meetings of the Board of Trustees, particularly against tuition increases. Susan serves as the co-chair of the PSC Open Access Committee, promoting access to education and resources.

Susan volunteers as the director of the Northwest Support Committee for the Homeless, reflecting her dedication to helping the homeless population. She was recognized by Community Board 10 for her work with the homeless, acknowledging her contributions to the community.

She was also recognized by Project Create for her teaching efforts at a drug rehabilitation center in Harlem.

In addition to her academic pursuits, Susan is a Registered Nurse and Nurse Practitioner. She worked for the Visiting Nurse Service of New York on weekends for twenty-five years, demonstrating her commitment to healthcare.





CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW

2023 BELLE ZELLER SCHOLAR

Rae Ellis

Before Rae's enrollment at CUNY School of Law, where she anticipates obtaining her JD degree in 2024, Rae attended Sarah Lawrence College, where she received her BA degree in Liberal Arts, focusing on Psychology and English Literature. Additionally, she spent a year studying abroad at Wadham College, Oxford University. During this period, she also had a career in film and TV.

She dedicates her time to volunteering at North Brooklyn Care Kits. In the spring of 2020, she initiated a mutual aid group with the purpose of assembling hygiene kits for individuals facing homelessness and displacement within her local community and across NYC. This effort has expanded significantly and persists in the distribution of numerous hygiene kits, encompassing essentials like soap, shampoo, lotion, face masks, hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks, body wipes, water, and snacks, as well as menstrual and winter warmth kits containing items such as gloves, hats, scarves, thermal socks, and hand warmers. Each kit is accompanied by information about community resources, along with a handwritten note crafted by a volunteer.

While the distribution of these kits occurs through community, free stores, and public libraries, the foremost priority remains providing them directly to those in need. This approach fosters meaningful connections with recipients, allowing volunteers to ensure that their various requirements are addressed, encompassing clothing, nourishment, and guidance in completing necessary paperwork to access community initiatives and resources. This endeavor has transcended its origins as a pandemic-related project and was a pivotal factor in Rae's decision to depart from her entertainment career and pursue a path in public interest law.

Rae aspires to become a legal professional within a nonprofit agency dedicated to providing legal services, advocating on behalf of New Yorkers facing poverty. In her leisure time, Rae takes pleasure in cooking, baking, reading, and her primary interest revolves around her beloved canine companion, Tala.



2023 BELLE ZELLER SCHOLAR

Sumaya Kabir



Sumaya Kabir takes immense pride in her identity as a native New Yorker. Her academic journey began with the successful completion of her associate degree at Queensborough Community College. Fueled by a deep passion for literature, she is currently pursuing a BA degree in English.

Throughout her college years, Sumaya discovered a profound affection for education and an innate joy in disseminating knowledge to others through the art of teaching. This realization prompted her to set an ambitious personal objective: to transcend conventional teaching methods. As a manifestation of this goal, she enthusiastically volunteered for esteemed organizations such as NYC Men Teach. This program is unwaveringly committed to empowering students from marginalized backgrounds, enabling them to embark on careers in education.

Sumaya actively participated in their recruitment events, using her influence to encourage fellow CUNY students to contemplate a path in teaching. Going above and beyond, she also assumed the role of a post-secondary bridge coach. In this capacity, she adeptly aided more than two hundred high school graduates in their transition to college life, offering invaluable guidance in charting their academic trajectories. Her motivation to partake in these initiatives emanated from a fervent desire to equip students with the essential tools to access higher education. She firmly believes that within the diverse tapestry of New York City reside countless talented students, each with a distinctive educational narrative, and she remains resolute in her commitment to unlocking their innate potential and facilitating their pursuit of higher learning.

Sumaya's ultimate aspiration is to become a literature instructor, a role she values for its profound capacity to expand minds and embrace novel perspectives. Her mission is to nurture a deep reverence for the humanities and ignite forthcoming generations' appreciation for the intrinsic worth of literature. Her own personal odyssey with literary works has strengthened her bond with education, and she fervently aspires to have a similar transformative impact upon others. Upon her forthcoming attainment of a bachelor's degree at Queens College, she envisages a continuation of her journey through the pursuit of a master's degree in English Education at Queens College.

Beyond her academic pursuits, Sumaya derives immense pleasure from exploring the vast expanse of the great outdoors, often immersing herself in the splendors of hiking and communing with nature. Additionally, she nurtures an unwavering passion for travel, recognizing it as a gateway to experiencing diverse cultures and accumulating a trove of unique experiences.



2023 BELLE ZELLER SCHOLAR

Nawel Messaoudi



Nawel Messaoudi, originally from Sfax, Tunisia, North Africa, made the move to New York in 2018 and is currently pursuing a major in biology at Kingsborough Community College. Nawel's decision to volunteer with ICNA Relief stems from the agency's direct support during a time when she needed temporary housing, protection, counseling, and even food. This personal experience sparked her passion for community service and motivated her to give back.

Through her involvement with ICNA Relief, Nawel has come to understand the fundamental Islamic principle of Zakat (charity or alms), one of the pillars of the faith. This opportunity has deepened her compassion and emphasized the significance of assisting those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Nawel's connection with ICNA Relief has nurtured empathy within her, driving her to contribute to the well-being of strangers and inspiring her to continue her work with this organization. Her sense of fulfillment is profound, particularly when she witnesses the gratitude of mothers who are enabled to provide food for their children. Experiencing the genuine and heartfelt appreciation of those facing hardships beyond their control has provided her with a humbling perspective on her own fortunate circumstances.

She firmly believes that societies and humanity thrive when compassion, knowledge, and collective efforts to improve everyone's lives are central values. This core belief is at the heart of her motivation for volunteering and fuels her commitment to ICNA Relief. Nawel's academic aspirations and research efforts are dedicated to the intricacies of reprogramming stem cells, as she approaches this field from a computational biology perspective. Her post-graduation plans involve pursuing a Ph.D. in stem cell biology, tissue engineering, and bioinformatics.

Her ultimate research goal is centered on pancreatic B cell reprogramming, with the aim of contributing to advancements that benefit individuals with type 1 diabetes, including herself.

Nawel is convinced that the Belle Zeller Scholarship has inspired her to increase her involvement with the agency, supporting her journey as a dedicated full-time student while managing the responsibilities of motherhood.

In addition to her academic pursuits and volunteering, Nawel enjoys reading, hiking, biking, and engaging in community service.



2023 BELLE ZELLER SCHOLAR

Nora Rajeh



Nora Rajeh's journey is one of resilience and determination. Having embarked on her path as an immigrant hailing from Yemen, she moved to New York in 2016 in search of new opportunities and a chance to fulfill her dreams. Her pursuit led her to Lehman College, where she immersed herself in the realm of Computer Graphics and Imaging, an endeavor that seamlessly fused her passion for technology with her innate creative spirit. Technology and creativity are the driving forces propelling Nora forward.

Nora's commitment is not limited to personal growth; it extends to her community. Nora devotes herself to volunteer service at a prominent Bronx Muslim center, where she stands as a beacon of inspiration to fellow immigrants. Within the walls of this center, she teaches Arabic and literacy skills to those who have recently arrived on foreign shores. The connection she feels to their shared migrant narrative fuels her dedication, as she works energetically towards their collective empowerment.

The significance of the Belle Zeller Scholarship in Nora's journey cannot be overstated. This scholarship forms the bedrock of her educational pursuit and serves as a sturdy pillar supporting her aspirations. With this foundation, Nora sets her sights on a lofty ambition--the intersection of technology and social good. Armed with her acquired skills, she envisions crafting digital educational tools and community-building platforms that resonate with the underserved sections of society. Her vision is not just about digital innovation; it is about harnessing her prowess to uplift and enrich the lives of those who have been marginalized.

For Nora Rajeh, the fusion of technology, creativity, and unwavering determination becomes a force that propels communities towards brighter horizons.



**CU
NY**
BELLE ZELLER
Scholarship Trust Fund



2023 BELLE ZELLER SCHOLAR

Beth Rocco

Beth Rocco's educational journey commenced years ago at Baruch College, yet she veered into the professional realm before seizing the opportunity to revive her academic aspirations. With determination, she received an Associate of Arts with Honors from Kingsborough Community College. Currently she forges ahead at Brooklyn College, pursuing a bachelor's degree in English alongside a minor in Film.

Beth's engagement in volunteer community service has been steadfast and profound, encompassing committee endeavors, mentorship, civic initiatives, and even gardening. Despite not harboring a personal affinity for gardening, she perceives the campus gardening experience as distinct. The gratification of contributing to endeavors benefiting others within a broader context than oneself is profound.

The Urban Farm and Garden project cultivates organic vegetables, promoting nutritional consciousness and fostering healthy dietary habits. Notably, it alleviates food insecurity by supplying fresh produce to those in need. Beth's involvement, whether tending to the land, sowing seeds, or harvesting crops, resonates with a sense of purpose and communal achievement.

Post-undergraduate studies, she envisions pursuing a master's degree in English, potentially culminating in a PhD. Beth's commitment to lifelong learning extends to contemplating roles in writing, publishing, or education.

For Beth, the Belle Zeller Scholarship embodies the ethos of striving for the greater good and loftier objectives, both personally and communally. She acknowledges her good fortune in traversing this path and feels profoundly honored as a recipient of this prestigious scholarship. In life, the impact on others outweighs the occupation one holds.

Beyond academia, Beth's interests span various genres of music, art, literature, and a fervor for classic films, all harmonizing with her commitment to community engagement.



2023 BELLE ZELLER SCHOLAR

Holden Taylor



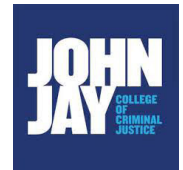
Holden Taylor serves as a tenant organizer and takes immense pride in his ongoing journey shaped by the City University of New York system. With a background spanning undergraduate and graduate studies at Hunter College, Taylor is presently pursuing a Ph.D. at the CUNY Graduate Center while also imparting knowledge at Baruch. These educational institutions, along with CUNY as a collective entity, have played an indispensable role in nurturing his personal growth, intellectual pursuits, and political convictions. He acknowledges that without the support of CUNY, his trajectory would have been less certain.

Holden's academic research and his pedagogical endeavors revolve around the realm of housing and tenancy. His focus extends beyond merely observing the challenging circumstances faced by tenants in New York City, where issues like escalating rents, widespread evictions, and deteriorating buildings are commonplace. What captivates him even more is the narrative of tenants actively assuming roles as protagonists in the ongoing struggle to reshape their circumstances, thus prompting a transformation in the urban landscape.

As a devoted participant in the Crown Heights Tenant Union and a driving force behind the establishment of Brooklyn Eviction Defense and the Brooklyn Eviction Defense Tenant Union, Holden's involvement has exposed him to the collective organization efforts of tenants striving to combat and redefine the adversities they encounter daily. He and his fellow tenant unionists firmly distance themselves from the notion of charitable acts or mere service provision. Instead, their primary objective revolves around cultivating sources of influence, nurturing tenants into capable leaders, and instigating authentic change agents. Their mission lies in harnessing the latent power residing within the 7 million tenants who consider NYC their home, with the ultimate aim of wresting control of the city from the grasp of landlords and the real estate sector.



Special Recognition of the 2021 and 2022 Scholars



2022

Martin Castro, Borough of Manhattan Community College

Kamalpreet K. Chohan, CUNY School of Law

Jannathul Ferdous Chowdhury, Hunter College

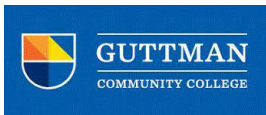
Timone S. Eskaros, Baruch College

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Ahona Islam, Queens College

Zahra Jamil, Brooklyn College

Shilpa Jindia, CUNY School of Law

Sindy Kalauch, Hunter College

Gauri Khanna, Baruch College

Andrea Nicktee Juarez Mendoza, The Graduate Center

Kristen L. Miller, The Graduate Center

Manav Tilwani, Baruch College

Syed Muhammad Shahmir Zaidi, City College of New York





**The Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund
Board of Trustees and Advisory Board Members**

**Congratulate the
2023 Friend of CUNY Honorees and
Student Scholars!**

KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
congratulates

Belle Zeller Scholarship Recipients

Nawel Messaoudi
KCC Biotechnology Major

and

Beth Rocco
KCC Alumna

With 50+ majors, a dozen fully online degrees
and certificate programs to help you upskill your
skill set, **everyone belongs** at

KINGSBOROUGH
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

★ DREAMS BEGIN HERE ★

CUNY

Queens College President Frank H. Wu congratulates the following honorees:

Lifetime Achievement Award recipients

Raymond Paretzky '83, 1981 Belle Zeller Scholar

Robert Cermele

Susan DiRaimo

Matthew Sapienza

2023 Belle Zeller Scholar

Sumaya Kabir, Queens College Student

Special congratulations to New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, AFT President Randi Weingarten, and all of the CUNY College Belle Zeller Scholars.





REAL SOLUTIONS FOR KIDS & COMMUNITIES



On behalf of the 1.7-million-member **American Federation of Teachers**, we are proud to support the **Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund** and applaud those who will be honored at its 2023 Friends of CUNY and Salute Our Scholars awards ceremony.

Congratulations to AFT President **Randi Weingarten**, who will receive the Award for Distinguished Leadership in Education, and other honorees, including the recipients of the Belle Zeller Scholarship Award, which honors the founding president of the Professional Staff Congress and professor emerita of political science at Brooklyn College. We share your appreciation for commitment to social responsibility and scholarship.

We stand with you as champions of **great schools and colleges** that fulfill the promise of public education, **good jobs** that support a middle-class life, **affordable healthcare** for all, the **fight** against discrimination and hate, and the **defense of democracy**.

#RealSolutionsForKids #IamAFT



aft.org



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[@AFTunion](https://twitter.com/AFTunion)



[AFTunion](https://www.instagram.com/AFTunion)



[@AFTunion](https://www.youtube.com/AFTunion)



Lehman College President
Fernando Delgado and the Faculty,
Staff, and Students congratulate the
Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund
and their 2023 honorees

Honorable Carl Heastie

Speaker, New York State Assembly

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Majority Leader, New York State Senate

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Partner, McDermott Will and Emery

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CFO, American Council of Learned Societies
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Robert Cermele

Treasurer, PSC CUNY Welfare Fund

Susan DiRaimo

Lecturer, Lehman College and City College

Nora Rajeh

Belle Zeller Scholar, Student at Lehman College



The Professional Staff Congress is proud to support the Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund, established in honor of Dr. Belle Zeller, the founding president of our union.

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