Brooklyn College president announces retirement

By Conor Skelding  11:30 a.m. | Jul. 24, 2015

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In a college-wide email, Milliken credited her for creating a new graduate film school, new athletic fields, and increasing enrollment in the sciences, among other accomplishments.

CUNY's board of trustees appointed Gould in June 2009.

"In addition, Provost William Tramontano and President Gould created four new academic schools, resulting in a five-school structure at Brooklyn College which identifies the full range of its academic strengths: the Humanities and Social Sciences; Natural and Behavioral Sciences; Visual, Media and Performing Arts; Business; and Education," Milliken wrote.
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Brooklyn College. (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews)

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Milliken said that the trustees will begin a national search for Gould's successor in the fall.
Brooklyn College President Karen Gould Is Retiring Next Summer

After six years as president.

By SIMONE WILSON (Patch Staff) (/users/simone-wilson)

Brooklyn College President Karen Gould, appointed in 2009, will be leaving her post and going into retirement next summer, the college confirms.

Gould sent out the following letter on Thursday.
Dear Campus Community,

I write to share with you my decision to retire next summer, in July 2016, in order to spend more time with family members and enjoy personal interests.

This coming year marks my 42nd year in higher education and my seventh year at Brooklyn College. It has been a great honor and pleasure to work with you on behalf of this remarkable institution. We have accomplished much together in pursuit of educational access and academic excellence.

I look forward to working with you in the year ahead and to ensuring a smooth transition for the future leadership.

In sincere appreciation,

Karen L. Gould

City University of New York (CUNY) chancellor James Milliken also sent an email to students and staff announcing Gould's decision.

In the email, he praised her for creating the college's new five-school structure — as well as a new graduate film school — and "enhancing the profile and quality of Brooklyn College's science programs."

Gould's department shakeups have also earned her some on-campus critics over the years. When Gould used her executive power (http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323993804578614233313436340) to remove faculty-elected department chairmen for three of the college's top
departments in 2013, she was met with fierce push-back from faculty.

The college's nationwide search for a new president will begin this fall.

"I am confident that the next President of Brooklyn College will build upon her legacy and the superb work of the College's talented faculty, staff and students," Milliken says.
Five Queens campuses get $5million

By Sadee Ali Kully

City University of New York colleges across the borough will receive an estimated $5 million this fiscal year from the borough president's discretionary funds to support capital projects at CUNY campuses.

The funding is directed toward enhancing the educational experience at Queens College in Flushing, York College in Jamaica, Queensborough Community College in Bayside, LaGuardia Community College and the CUNY School of Law, both of which are in Long Island City.

This year's funding is in addition to the $1.3 million that was allocated last year for CUNY capital projects, which included $750,000 for the LaGuardia Community College business and entrepreneurial training center and $550,000 for the creation of a modern kitchen and dining hall at Queensborough Community College.

"CUNY has a long history of providing a high-quality, competitive and remarkably affordable higher education that produces job-ready graduates with respected academic credentials," Borough President Melinda Katz said. "This $5 million allocation will help guarantee that the physical infrastructure of these five institutions remains top-of-the-line and fully able to support a first-class experience for CUNY's hardworking students."

The funding will be divided between five major capital projects: $1.25 million for the construction of a "one-stop" student services center at Queens College, $1 million for laboratory and classroom upgrades in the Science and Modern Languages departments at York College, $1 million for the construction of a customized business and entrepreneurial training center at LaGuardia Community College, $1 million to create a modern kitchen and dining hall at Queensborough Community College that will replace the college's current undersized basement dining hall and $750,000 to improve the auditorium's audio-visual systems and the addition of teleconferencing and lecture-capture systems at the CUNY School of Law.

Reach Reporter Sadee Ali Kully by e-mail at skully@cnglocal.com or by phone at (718) 260-4546.
Capital improvements coming to Qns. CUNYs

by Christopher Barca, Associate Editor | Posted: Thursday, July 23, 2015 10:30 am

Students of the five City University of New York institutions in Queens are going to have some new amenities to take advantage of in the coming academic years.

Borough President Melinda Katz announced last Friday that she has allocated $5 million to be split among the five schools, with most of the money going toward new building construction at Queens College, LaGuardia Community College and Queensborough Community College.

The largest piece of the pie, $1.25 million, is going toward the construction of a one-stop student services center at Queens College in Flushing, replacing the school’s outdated facility.

According to school spokesman Jeffrey Rosenstock, an exact on-campus location for the One Stop Center has yet to be decided upon but that there is more than enough space at the school for the building.

“QC is exploring a number of possible locations for this new One Stop Center, which will involve the use of existing spaces on campus,” Rosenstock said. “The proposed One Stop Center will improve upon an already centralized location now dedicated to providing students with a single point of communication for issues ranging from admissions, academic records, advising, counseling, registration and financial aid.”

There is no anticipated start date for construction and the total cost of the building is projected at $3.2 million.

Rosenstock added that the educational institution is in the process of attempting to secure additional government funding for the project.

At LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, a $1 million customized business and entrepreneurial training center is planned, which school spokesman Robert Jaffe says will hopefully open during the 2017-18 academic year.

“We can envision a space where students can learn everything from the latest software to business
owners taking classes to develop business plans and secure capital financing,” Jaffe said.

The spokesman added that faculty offices will also be housed at the site, which will cost approximately $8.3 million to build.

In addition to Katz’s $1 million allocation, the City Council gave the school $2.4 million for the project, a total that will be matched by the state, according to Jaffe.

At Queensborough Community College in Bayside, $1 million has been set aside for the construction of a modern dining hall, replacing the school’s undersized basement dining hall.

A spokesperson for the school said the new dining hall will better accommodate the institution’s 16,000 students, and while there is no cost estimate yet, the college hopes to have it completed in two years.

Additional improvements include $1 million for laboratory and classroom upgrades in the science and modern languages departments at York College in Jamaica and $750,000 for upgrades to the CUNY School of Law’s auditorium.
David Gómez is selected as 7th president of Hostos Community College

By Patrick Rocchio

The interim president of Hostos Community College since August 2014 was recently selected as the college’s seventh president.

David Gómez, the new Hostos president, has over four decades of service and experience in the City University of New York system and its community colleges.

A firm believer in the community college movement, Gomez said that he would lead the institution as changes and development in the southern part of the borough create challenges and also opportunities for its residents.

“The challenge for this institution moving forward is to embrace the changes taking place in the Bronx in a positive way,” said Gomez, adding that in viewing the changes in the south Bronx, he will empower people to ‘move up’ instead of moving out.

From its humble beginnings in a closed tire factory building in 1968 to a sprawling campus along the Grand Concourse at East 149th Street today, Gomez, who holds a Doctor of Education Degree, believes that what is perhaps unique to Hostos Community College compared with otherschools around the country is its close synergistic relationship to the community.

Indeed, Gomez said that he feels that the bonds forged when the community fought Hostos’ potential closure during New York City’s 1970s fiscal crisis created a sense of community ‘ownership’ of the institution of higher learning that he does not believe exists in the same way at any of more than 100 community colleges he has visited around the country.

“There is a synergy between the community and the college that I don’t think exists anywhere else,” the college president said. “This is an institution that’s not merely ‘in’ the community, but of the community.”

The new president said that Hostos should continue to focus on its Allied Health Career Pipeline Program, as well the media and technology fields.

A partnership with Lehman College to facilitate Hostos graduates pursuing bachelor degrees is also a focus, he said.

Gomez said he continues to be inspired by the students he sees at Hostos, many of whom have to deal with students’ issues that become intensified in the college’s Melrose location: homelessness, raising two or three children while attending college, and juggling several jobs.

“It is an extraordinary struggle for them, and I am extremely proud and in awe of what they do,” he said of the students at the college, adding that many face extraordinary challenges.

The president added that he is not given to speaking in hyperbole, noting that the challenges many of the students face are real.

Gomez is committed to making sure that the college experience of Hostos students is no different from that of college students anywhere in the country.

He said he will work to ensure that Hostos students will receive the same quality and academic rigor that CUNY students should and do receive.

This is Gomez’s second stint at CUNY Hostos, having worked at the college from 1974 to 1986, but said that until his appointment as interim president in August 2014, he had not set foot back on the campus in decades. He had been an administrator in a variety of capacities at other CUNY institutions around the city before rising to his current position.

Reach Reporter Patrick Rocchio at (718) 260-4597. E-mail him at procchio@enflocal.com. Follow him on Twitter @patrickrocchio.

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Panel of expert judges to choose 10 winners of 2015 Daily News Hometown Heroes in Education

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New Yorkers have spoken and now it's time for the judges to pick the 2015 Daily News Hometown Heroes in Education.

For weeks, The News has received nominations detailing the heartfelt and heroic work being performed by unsung school staffers across the five boroughs.

A panel of expert judges will select 10 winners during a luncheon Aug. 4. They will be honored at a ceremony in October.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize the work of dedicated educators across our city," said city Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña.
"I look forward to reading about their stories and the students and families whose lives they've touched. I've always said that great teachers do so much more than just teach — they make a difference."

Farina will serve as one of the judges along with City University of New York Chancellor James Milliken, NY1 anchor Pat Kiernan, United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew, Brooklyn College education Prof. David Bloomfield, educator Geoffrey Canada, New York City Charter School Center CEO James Merriman, Council of School Supervisors & Administrators President Ernest Logan and others.

"Picking the best of the best is a great pleasure and responsibility," said Bloomfield.

This is the third year The News has sponsored the awards.

"There's always a bit of push and pull among the judges," said Kiernan, a veteran judge who also serves as emcee of the awards ceremony.

"One judge wants to recognize someone who's been an exceptional educator for 50 years," he added.

"Another judge might be inclined to recognize a newer teacher who motivates students with new ideas. So we negotiate a bit and try to come up with a list of winners that touches on everything."

The News received about 200 nominations for principals, teachers and counselors who have gone above and beyond their job descriptions to help their students.

That includes Susan Kennedy, a tireless 77-year-old teacher at St. Andrew Avellino School in Flushing, Queens, who has been teaching for more than 40 years, tutors kids after school and helps out in her community.

And there's social worker Millie Pacheco, who is determined to help teens incarcerated at Rikers Island find hope and make positive changes in their young lives.

Nominee Michael Konstalid combines his skills as a physical therapist and trained carpenter to help disabled students in city schools feel like they are part
of the crowd.

"It is almost an impossible task to select winners from so many outstanding nominations," said Daily News President & Editor-in-Chief Colin Myler.

"They are all winners in their own right."

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Bernie Sanders's '100% Brooklyn' Roots Are as Unshakable as His Accent

By JASON HOROWITZ    JULY 24, 2015

Ivor Williams stood on his porch and stared suspiciously at the visitor who was pointing to the attic of his pink and shingled house near Brooklyn College.

"I used to live here," Steve Slavin explained, to no noticeable reaction from Mr. Williams. Then he uttered the magic words: "With Bernie Sanders."

"Bernie?" Mr. Williams, a 78-year-old immigrant from Guyana, exclaimed. "I was just watching Bernie on the TV."

Hillary Rodham Clinton may be a former senator from New York who located her campaign headquarters in Brooklyn Heights, but all it takes to know who really represents Brooklyn in the race for the Democratic nomination is for Mr. Sanders to open his mouth and utter a few syllables.

As Mr. Sanders, a senator from Vermont, draws large crowds on the campaign trail and enjoys an unexpected surge, his Brooklyn accent and upbringing in the heavily Jewish neighborhood of Flatbush off Kings Highway have become a particular point of pride for friends, former schoolmates and fellow progressives in the borough where he was born.

"I'm very proud of the fact that he speaks Brooklyn, because he's not a phony, and that shows," said Marty Alpert, who used to cheer for Mr. Sanders when he was on the track team at James Madison High School, where she is now on the alumni board.
On the school’s crowded Wall of Distinction, Mr. Sanders is no longer quite so overshadowed by such alumni as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Senator Chuck Schumer and four Nobel Prize winners, or, for that matter, Judge Judy and Cousin Brucie.

Mr. Slavin was Mr. Sanders’s roommate when they were both students at Brooklyn College. Now retired from teaching economics, Mr. Slavin recalled staying up late listening to music on Mr. Sanders’s record player and discussing Supreme Court cases, Marbury v. Madison in particular. And he remembered how Mr. Sanders would curse when they heard their loathed landlady angrily marching up the stairs.

“He was a lifer,” Mr. Slavin said, meaning that Mr. Sanders had known only one place his entire life.

In fact, Mr. Sanders was on the verge of leaving — first for the University of Chicago, where he transferred from Brooklyn College, and ultimately for Vermont.

But Brooklyn’s imprint on Mr. Sanders was not limited to his tongue. In the populist politics he has espoused for decades as a leftist activist, socialist mayor, and independent congressman and senator, those who knew Mr. Sanders, who declined to comment for this article, detect the influence of postwar Brooklyn stickball games, arguments over money between his parents, and the work ethic instilled in him as a decorated long-distance runner.

“He is 100 percent Brooklyn,” said Larry Sanders, the candidate’s older brother, who decades ago traded in his Brooklyn accent for a British one when he moved to England and pursued Green Party politics.

The Sanders brothers lived with their parents in a prewar apartment building on East 26th Street that had a fake fireplace in the lobby. In apartment 2C, Mr. Sanders and his brother swapped nights in a small bedroom and living room, ate their mother’s meat-heavy dinners, and made occasional outings to the local delicatessen and Chinese restaurant.

Their father, a paint salesman who emigrated from Poland at age 17, worked out of Long Island and put 25,000 miles a year on his car. The family rarely discussed politics and, according to Larry Sanders, looked at their grandfather, “a very strong
socialist,” as “eccentric.”

What their parents did talk about was money. “There were tensions about money, which I think is important,” he said. “There was no sense of long-term security. A salesman, things can go up and things can go down.”

But if that at all contributed to the senator’s economic populism, then his appreciation for an equal playing field was influenced by the self-regulating society of street games outside their house.

Sid Ganis, a past president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, who lived downstairs from the Sanders family, recalled a roving gang of Jewish kids who would play stickball, marbles and boxball, all without adult meddling.

“In a way, when Bernard talks about cooperatives and so on, he is drawing on something that was real for many years,” his brother said. “That the people who did it, ran it.”

Mr. Sanders went to elementary school at P.S. 197 and spent his Saturday mornings at the Nostrand movie theater watching cartoons and serials with his brother. They took occasional trips into Manhattan, including one visit to Rockefeller Center where his brother recalled a “Vermont state propaganda place” that made the brothers marvel at the affordability of the land. When Mr. Sanders married years later, he used money from his wedding presents to buy acres in Montpelier.

Mr. Sanders started attending Madison, just down the street from his family’s apartment, in 1955. Walter Block, now an economics professor and libertarian at Loyola University New Orleans, would walk to school with Mr. Sanders through what he called a “pretty pinkish” neighborhood. On Bedford Avenue, they would enter a school that was a city in itself.

With about 5,000 students and split schedules between underclassmen and juniors and seniors to thin out hallway traffic jams, there was also a hunger to move up in the world.

“We wanted to count,” said Larry Hite, a well-known commodities trader who graduated the same year as Mr. Sanders.
Mr. Sanders was a good student. He wrote for the school paper and ended up running for school president, but he had to settle for president of his class. His brother introduced him to Freud and taught him why Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" was superior to Edmund Burke's conservatism.

While others would eat pizza at Louis Gino's, hang out at the Avalon Tearoom or avoid Dubrow's Cafeteria after school, Mr. Sanders's free time was spent on the track. As a tall freshman with a long stride, he became one of the borough's top long-distance runners. He became so used to winning that in one race at Prospect Park, he pushed his co-captain, Dan Jelinsky, ahead of him "so that I came in first," Mr. Jelinsky recalled.

These days, the school is pushing Mr. Sanders out front and center. Jodie Cohen, the school's principal, talks about how happy she was when she heard he was running. "If Bernie wins and then Chuck becomes majority leader," she said, referring to Mr. Schumer, "all of Madison's dreams will become a reality."

Ms. Alpert, the alumni board member, is also enthusiastic about the attention Mr. Sanders is getting. She said that when a counterpart at nearby Midwood High School inquired about creating its own Wall of Distinction, the Madison board members responded, "Besides Woody Allen, who have you got?"

But the end of Mr. Sanders's years at Madison was not a happy time. His mother, whose heart had been weakened by a bout of rheumatic fever as a child, had taken ill. He lost interest in track and enrolled, unhappily, in Brooklyn College.

"He wanted to go to Harvard," said Lou Howort, 73, a track teammate.

After Mr. Sanders's graduation in 1959, his brother returned from Harvard Law School to be close to their mother as her condition worsened. It was around that time that Mr. Sanders rented a furnished room with Mr. Slavin on East 21st Street in the attic of a Madison Latin teacher and his wife.

Mr. Slavin said that his old roommate needed some space from the tensions at home, and that Mr. Sanders was crushed when his mother died when she was just 46 after a second heart operation failed.
By the end of his year at Brooklyn College, Mr. Sanders was more than ready to leave for Chicago. When finals came around, according to Mr. Slavin, he paid less attention to his exams than to the books he brought back from the college library. He was particularly fond of a biography of John Peter Altgeld, a 19th-century progressive Illinois governor who championed child labor laws, supported striking workers and challenged the Democratic powerhouse of the time, Grover Cleveland.

Now, as he challenges the current Democratic powerhouse, Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Sanders's hometown supporters hope that a combination of his unabashed liberalism, long-distance runner's persistence and old-school Brooklyn charm will resonate with voters.

It already does resonate with Mr. Williams, who shrugged off his own family's analysis that Mr. Sanders's being "straight-up honest" would only get him so far.

"It's great that the future president lived in my house," Mr. Williams said.
What Home Means to New York’s Oldest Old

By JOHN LELAND  JULY 24, 2015

At the Hebrew Home at Riverdale, in the Bronx, Helen Moses, 90, had news.

“There’s not going to be a wedding,” she said.

It was an afternoon in June, just one month since Ms. Moses had announced her plans to marry Howie Zeimer, the man down the hall. She spoke, as always, with absolute finality.

“I’d first like to live together for a while,” she said. “I don’t want to give up this room.”

Ms. Moses is one of six older New Yorkers who agreed to be part of a yearlong project looking at the city’s “oldest old”: people 85 and older, one of the fastest-growing age groups in the city. As summer arrived, their lives moved in directions as diverse as the city itself.

On Manhattan’s Upper West Side, John Sorensen, 91, was devastated: His trusted home attendant was leaving for a new job. In Brooklyn, Frederick Jones, 88, had parts of two toes amputated and was now in a rehabilitation center, wondering how he would ever return to his walk-up apartment. Ping Wong, 90, made a rare trip outside her building, accompanying her daughter for dim sum in Chinatown.

Ruth Willig, 91, said she was starting to make peace with her new assisted living residence, but she was still angry at being displaced from her old one. And Jonas Mekas, 92, the writer and filmmaker, returned home from the Venice Biennale in Italy to a formidable amount of work: book manuscripts to finish, a movie voice-over
to record and a museum in Paris that wanted everything he had on the Velvet Underground, Andy Warhol and Edie Sedgwick. “I have nothing promised for anybody else except this,” he said. “But it’s a lot of work.”

In the time I’ve spent with them, conversations have returned frequently to questions of home: what it means to live independently or in a residence for old people; how to balance safety and essential care with privacy and autonomy.

Home, for some, is a score sheet of all the things they have given up with age.

For others it is something they cling to. Only 12 percent of New Yorkers 85 and up live in group accommodations like nursing homes, according to census data analyzed by Susan Weber-Stoger of Queens College.

Most live in their own homes or with relatives, cobbling together networks of support: 53 percent say they have trouble living independently; 58 percent say they have trouble walking; 31 percent say they have cognitive difficulties.

“New York is a good place to get old,” said Ms. Wong, who lives in a subsidized apartment and pays nothing for a home attendant who cooks, cleans and shops. Two hip replacements and arthritis in her legs and hands limit her mobility.

“I try my best to be independent,” Ms. Wong said. “And because of that, maybe I live longer. But of course I don’t want to live too long. Not a good thing to live too long.”

FOR FREDERICK JONES, home has become an odyssey.

When we first met, near the beginning of the year, in his walk-up apartment in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, he had recently returned home from 64 days in a hospital and nursing home, after a dangerous plunge in his blood pressure. He had a severely infected big toe, a product of his diabetic neuropathy.

Life was good, he said.

“Usually my day is: Go to bed late, get up late, eat breakfast around 12 o’clock,
and if the weather is nice I might go out,” he said at the time. “I like to window-shop. I go to Macy’s or Century 21 or Bloomingdale’s and I’ll spend two hours and not buy a thing.”

By spring the routine had changed. He no longer got out regularly, and the infection had flared up in his other foot. Then he was gone; a recording said his telephone had been disconnected at the customer’s request.

When I found him, in early June, in a Brooklyn hospital and then at Phoenix Rehabilitation and Nursing Center by Fort Greene Park, he was as cheerful as ever.

“I don’t know what I’m wearing,” he said, smiling in an out-of-character Enyce sweatshirt that he had been given because his own clothes were soiled. “This might be a dead man’s outfit. I guess they save clothes. I don’t know where they get them from.”

He was also missing parts of the big toe and second toe in his right foot, which had become gangrenous. Even before the surgery, Mr. Jones struggled climbing the 37 stairs to his apartment. By mid-July, after more than a month in rehab, those stairs were starting to look insurmountable.

“I feel I’m wasting away here,” he said. He was sitting at his assigned table in the dining room, shouting over loud music on the stereo. Before the operation he had walked with a cane; now he used a wheelchair, his leg muscles weakening with disuse. “I think things are getting worse instead of better,” he said. Signals from the doctors were noncommittal. “They don’t talk about leaving,” he said. “When I talk about leaving, they say that depends on your progress in physical therapy and occupational therapy. I don’t see that I’m gaining anything.”

Like many nursing homes, Phoenix is short on staff. Despite a five-star overall rating from Medicare, it receives only two stars (“below average”) for staffing and registered nurse staffing. For Mr. Jones, this means frequent waits to be taken to meals or the bathroom.

The facility’s administrator, Ephie Carni, responding through a spokeswoman, said that in surveys of residents, the center had “not seen a staffing issue to be a concern,” and that the overall satisfaction rating was 8.75 out of 10.
Mr. Jones thought often of his mother and grandmother, who both died in rehabilitation facilities, he said. The other day, someone called to tell him that his pastor of 28 years, Dr. Clarence Norman Sr. of the First Baptist Church of Crown Heights, had died at age 85.

His own prospects remained unclear. “Now my roommate’s saying, ‘You ain’t getting out of here,’ ” he said. “August is the month my mother died in, and man, I think about it all the time during that month. And I know it’s going to be terrible on me if I got to be in this place in August.”

AT THE HEBREW HOME at Riverdale, a part of RiverSpring Health, Helen Moses had her own thoughts about home.

“I never thought I’d be in a nursing home,” she said recently, a refrain she repeated almost every time I visited. “That’s when nobody wants you. You end up in a nursing home.”

Ms. Moses, who moved into the home at age 84 in 2009, after a fractious stay with one of her sons, has in many ways flourished there. She started the second love affair of her life — with Howie Zeimer, 69, who is disabled from a severe car accident after college. She made new friends. And her glee club just finished recording a CD, to be distributed to other residents. Her daughter visits weekly.

Yet there were things she does not like, she said. Being in a nursing home meant you had to adapt to everything; nothing adapted to you: not the neighbors with dementia, not the food, not the staff who entered her room without knocking.

“Sometimes I want to go home,” she said. “But I can’t. There’s no place I can go.”

Lately, though, she had other concerns. She loved Mr. Zeimer, she said, but getting married was such a lot of work — especially since her daughter did not approve.

By June, things were off. “I’ll tell you why,” she said. “Howie’s in a wheelchair and it’s very difficult to do anything with him.”
A month later she was rethinking. Maybe they would get married, as long as they
did not move away from her daughter.

“He wants to live in places I don’t like,” Ms. Moses said.

Mr. Zeimer said he was willing to compromise, as long as it meant being with
her. “I think it’s proper, since we are devotedly, happily in love,” he said.

Mr. Zeimer wanted to show her the progress he had made in physical therapy.
He stood up from his wheelchair and teetered precariously on tent-pole legs.

“Sit down, you’re making me nervous,” she said.

“No,” Mr. Zeimer said.

“No?”

Ms. Moses backed down.

The banter is part of their routine. At night, she said, she knew Mr. Zeimer would
come to her room and lie with her on the narrow bed to watch television. And when
he returned to his own room, he would call her to say good night.

“Like last night,” Mr. Zeimer said. “Helen fell asleep during the game, so I
excused myself. I kissed her on both cheeks and said, ‘Good night, my darling.’

“Then I called her and said, ‘I’ve never loved anyone the way I love the hell out of
you.’”

Ms. Moses grew uncharacteristically speechless.

And what did she say in return?

She mouthed the words silently. “I love you, too,” she said.

AMONG THE OLDEST OLD, gerontologists talk about the risks of social
isolation — life without daily contact, without human touch, without eyes to see if
they fall.
In his Upper West Side apartment, John Sorensen often goes days without seeing another person. Though he has an emergency-alert pendant, he doesn’t wear it if he is not wearing a shirt, a common practice in the warm months.

Yet for him, the apartment provides a connection to his past selves, and to the two men who shaped his adult life.

The first was his high school art teacher, who after graduation called him in for an extraordinary talk. “He told me what I was,” Mr. Sorensen said. “I didn’t know I was gay. He laid out what I should do, the school I should go to, that I should go to New York and become a decorator. I followed everything he said, and it’s been a wonderful life.”

The second was the man who shared that life for 60 years, Walter Caron, whose death in 2009 left a gaping hole.

“Being here, Walter’s still here,” Mr. Sorensen said. “When I look at certain things I think, he picked that out, he found that. He’s always sort of with me.”

Since our first meeting, Mr. Sorensen has lost some of his mobility and short-term memory. He rarely leaves the apartment, and his glaucoma makes it hard for him to see faces in front of him. A niece of Mr. Caron’s takes care of his finances.

But on a recent afternoon, Mr. Sorensen could tell the stories behind all his furnishings, mostly involving Mr. Caron. If Mr. Sorensen’s late life has meaning for him, it lies in these memories and the connections they hold.

“In this kitchen I hung the wallpaper,” he said. “I put the new floor down, which needs to be replaced. I painted this whole apartment. I painted stripes in that room, all hand-painted. I was always doing something. And to sit around and not be able to do anything is really rough.

“I have nothing more to achieve. Nothing more I can do. I always thought that in old age I’d be able to play the piano and read more, and I can’t do either, and that’s a great disappointment.”

Yet to give up the apartment would be to give up the best part of his life, he said,
and be left with only old age. “If I have to crawl I don’t want to leave here,” he said. “No matter what. I couldn’t stand it.”

In his Brooklyn loft, Jonas Mekas had his mind on the home he long ago left, in Lithuania. “My ideal,” he said, unprompted, “was this guy who used to visit my family when I was a child, and he used to climb on the roof and stand on his head on the chimney. And my father told me once he was 100 years. So that’s my ideal.”

As a farm boy in Lithuania, Mr. Mekas knew what home was. It was continuity. But years of forced transience — first in Nazi labor camps, then in camps for displaced persons, then in virtual exile during the Soviet era — shattered his sense of permanence. Instead he lives in adaptation — nomadic in his cultural curiosity, quick to put down roots wherever he lands.

“I say my home is in cinema,” he said.

In another sense, home is a 2,000-square-foot loft in the Clinton Hill section of Brooklyn, with a twin bed off the kitchen and boxes of his work everywhere, and a Royal typewriter opposite the stove. “This is my bedroom, my archives, my kitchen, my recording studio all in one,” Mr. Mekas said. His son, Sebastian, 33, lives with him.

Home, for Mr. Mekas, is not around people his age.

“I need energy,” he said. “I’m maybe a little like a vampire. I feel best when I’m with younger and active people. When I’m with people that there’s no energy, it drags me down, so I try not to be there. I disappear, or I don’t go to such situations.” He added, “I realize that’s life, but it’s not my world. I’m somewhere else.”

RUTH WILLIG HAD to give her home up twice, neither time without some pain. The first time was in 2009, when her children persuaded her to move from her two-story home in New Jersey to an assisted living residence in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

“It changed my life, moving into an institution,” she said. Suddenly her hours were not her own; meals were at fixed times and fixed tables, with the same people
each day. Privacy was a thing of the past. "It was an adjustment, but I think I made it," she said. "I learned to accept life the way it is, realize why I did it sooner than some of the people I knew that were still living alone, on their own."

Then in the spring of 2014, the owners announced that they were closing; everyone had three months to leave. Her resentment flared and held steady: the callousness of the owner, the separation from friends, the distance from her daughter who lived in Park Slope.

Now, more than a year later, Ms. Willig said she was starting to let the anger go. She signed up for a writing class in her new assisted-living building, Sunrise at Sheepshead Bay. With the warm weather, she has been able to read or walk by the water's edge.

At the writing class, a woman talked about having a degree in psychiatry, which surprised Ms. Willig.

"I keep saying there's no one here that's interesting," Ms. Willig said, "and my daughter says, 'You really don't know them.' And she's so right. So many people are in their 90s, and what they are today is not what they were."

Yet even amid her growing contentment, Ms. Willig sometimes seems to drift back toward an ambient unease. After a life spent caring for others, she said, what she misses is not just her home but the purpose that came from her place in it. "Maybe that's what I'm missing," she said.

"I really am not needed by anyone, come to think of it. I'm certainly cared for. I know there's a lot of love from them, and I feel it," she said, talking of her four children and her grandchildren. "But outside of providing money for them when I can, I don't have any ——." Her voice tailed off. "I guess that's a problem of living longer."

A version of this article appears in print on July 26, 2015, on page MB1 of the New York edition with the headline: A Place in the World.
City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, tired of Mayor de Blasio taking credit for NYPD hiring, Uber deal, speaks up

"Let's be clear — this had nothing to do with the mayor," Melissa Mark-Viverito said of City Hall's agreement with e-hall company Uber.
City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito's resentment of Mayor de Blasio started simmering during negotiations over hiking the NYPD headcount in the city budget — then boiled over when he took credit for the Uber deal she helped broker, sources said.

Mark-Viverito was upset that media accounts failed to recognize her role in the June budget talks that led to the addition of 1,300 new officers to the Police Department, said a councilmember. But she was even more annoyed at that time that the mayor didn't give her credit, said the source.

"She blamed the mayor more," the councilmember said."

De Blasio's decision to agree to beef up the force came after intense lobbying from Mark-Viverito, who first asked the city to add 1,000 new cops during 2014 budget talks and pushed hard for the higher headcount in the negotiations this year.

The mayor — who had said throughout the budget process that the department didn't need more cops — ended up adding 1,300 officers.

The speaker and councilmembers saw that move as bigfooting. "It was like he was making it his plan by making it bigger," said the source.

Despite feeling bruised, Mark-Viverito — known for being blunt - held her tongue publicly.

But then de Blasio took credit for making peace with tech giant Uber, which had engaged in a multi-million ad campaign blasting the mayor.

On Thursday, a day after the administration backed off its push to cap Uber growth and the mayor trumpeted concessions the e-hail company made as a victory, she blasted de Blasio for making no mention of her role.
She said it was "sexist" for people to assume the men in City Hall steered the taxi talks.

"Let's be clear — this had nothing to do with the mayor," said Mark-Viverito, who was visibly angry.

She said it was "sexist" for people to assume the men in City Hall steered the taxi talks.

De Blasio was in Italy as the negotiations unfolded, and she had called him Tuesday to say she didn't want to have a vote. The measure would pass, she said, but increasing numbers of council members opposed it.

On Wednesday, before the decision to kill the vote on a cap was announced, she had a phone conversation with Gov. Cuomo, an Uber supporter.

After her outburst, a City Hall official said they "don't understand why she's so upset."

Plenty of council members did — and said Mark-Viverito felt the Council itself had been disrespected.

"The Council never wants to be taken for granted and never wants to be used as a chess piece on the mayor's chess board," said Queens Councilman Rory Lancman.

The mayor's victory lap was particularly eyebrow-raising because his side wasn't happy with the outcome.
Mayor de Blasio and Mark-Viverito met on Friday privately, and his office said it looks forward to working with her in the future.

De Blasio staffers were telling councilmembers they were disappointed because they had wanted a Council vote on the taxi cap, according to Council sources.

Mark-Viverito’s decision to publicly rip de Blasio was surprising because those two have been close — he lobbied for her to be speaker — but it is not entirely out of character for the outspoken lawmaker.

A Democrat, she has lambasted President Obama for not doing enough to help her native Puerto Rico in its debt crisis and she took a swipe at Gov. Cuomo on Twitter after the deadly East Harlem gas explosion for what she saw as his indifferent response. She declined to comment Friday on her relationship with the mayor.

"She's tough, and strong, and that's probably one of the reasons (de Blasio) wanted her there," said Kenneth Sherrill, a professor emeritus of political science at Hunter College.

He said it was a "massive political mistake" for de Blasio to fail to acknowledge her role.

"As a former Council member, he should have known," said Sherrill.

De Blasio might have learned his lesson.

He and Mark-Viverito met privately on Friday, and his office released a statement saying it looks forward to future "collaboration" with the Speaker and the City Council.
Cuomo-de Blasio war expands to new fronts

ALBANY—Don’t expect Andrew Cuomo and Bill de Blasio to hug anytime soon.

The feuding Democratic politicians last week opened a new front for their bickering — funding for the city’s buses and subways — and, people close to both say, private attempts to broker a public reconciliation have gone nowhere.

Tension between New York governors and mayors is nothing new, but the back-and-forth between these two former colleagues who insist they’re friends increasingly gives the impression that public policy questions are being held hostage to personal issues in a way that is extraordinary.

As Baruch College public affairs professor Doug Muzzio put it, “Governors and mayors often fight, and they deserve to fight. But come on — this is childish. It’s playground.”

MORE ON CAPITAL
- Capital Playbook: De Blasio’s worst friend; NYMag’s Cosby cover
- Albany Pro: Biden Joins Cuomo in Rochester; Albany fund-raising drops
- Capital Health Care: LIC’s latest turn; Brooklyn settlement

Last week was not a good one for de Blasio, who flew to the Vatican for a papal conference on climate just as a City Hall push to restrain the growth of car-hall companies came under heavy fire from its intended target, Uber. While he was in the air, a top mayoral aide announced an about face, to the consternation of New York City Council members and their speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, who were angry to be sidelined and belittled.
Cuomo jumped in at the last minute, praising Uber and describing de Blasio's plan as an unworkable impediment to job growth. During one of a series of interviews and public appearances Wednesday, the governor even said two de Blasio rivals—Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of Brooklyn and Scott Stringer, the city's comptroller—"showed real leadership" as they backed Uber against City Hall. The governor also shared the stage with Stringer at a rally to celebrate a state board's decision to raise the minimum wage for fast food workers—something de Blasio called for before Cuomo, but alas, was unable celebrate because of his Italy trip.

It puts the city and the mayor right back into a by-now familiar position: De Blasio may soon find himself having to head to Albany to beg a reluctant Legislature and the governor for the right to determine city policy on Uber, while Cuomo prepares to take credit for solving problems identified by the mayor.

During a Wednesday appearance on NY1, Cuomo asked the city to contribute more money to help fund the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's capital plan, even though de Blasio has already met Cuomo's previous requests for money transit funding.

Noting that the governor effectively controls the authority, de Blasio responded: "The M.T.A. is the state's domain."

It's important to remember that the tension between the decades-old "friends" escalated since de Blasio assumed office in 2014. They first clashed over de Blasio's plan to raise taxes to fund universal pre-kindergarten, but later that year, de Blasio did a huge favor for Cuomo by helping to coax the liberal wing of the Working Families Party into letting him have its nomination. (Cuomo agreed to a series of as-yet-unfulfilled promises to get him to do so.)

People close to the mayor say de Blasio felt this massive favor would be worth something—that the governor would help guide his agenda through Albany. The opposite happened in the legislative session that just concluded: de Blasio got just one year of mayoral school control (instead of the seven afforded his predecessors, or the three he said he'd accept) and had a major asterisk attached to an overhaul of the 421-a real estate subsidy that he needs to build more affordable housing.

De Blasio publicly blew up at Cuomo, and his allies say he's through trying to deal with a governor he views as a dishonest broker.

Cuomo's allies described the mayor as weak, and say his expectations of what the governor would do to advance his agenda—friends or not—were never grounded in reality.

While there are years of history between the men—Cuomo once promised he and de Blasio would have the best relationship between a governor and mayor ever—the governor appears to above all to see in the mayor a leader who is weak.

"Cuomo is feral," said one Democratic strategist in Albany. "He sees this guy is wounded, and wounded badly, and his natural instinct is to pour salt in the wound—even if it's not helpful for New Yorkers."

For now, neither man is moving, and without any kind of governmental deadline coming,
neither is expected to. The state Legislature convenes again in January; de Blasio is up for re-election in 2017.

Aides indicated that no meeting between the two leaders is imminent.

De Blasio's press secretary, Karen Hinton, said staffs were talking about the M.T.A.

Cuomo spokesman John Kelly declined to comment.

After missing a chance to bump into de Blasio at a dinner hosted by the Bronx Democratic Party, the governor told reporters, "He's busy, I'm busy. And when I see him I'll see him."
The Feast Is Still Moveable

By Karen Sullivan

In 1950, Ernest Hemingway reportedly told his friend A.E. Hotchner, "If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast."

Years later, when I was 19, those words spoke to me, as they did to many young Americans. On the surface, Hemingway and I were opposites. He was a brash, square-jawed Midwesterner. I was an awkward, bookish girl from New York’s outer boroughs. Hemingway lived in Paris for two years, writing and interacting with soon-to-be famous writers and artists. He then moved on to write about war in Spain, wrote essays, short stories, and novels, and won the Nobel Prize in Literature. I lived and worked in Paris for six years during the 1980s, studied literature, met no famous writers or artists. Yet I returned home with my own moveable feast. Here is a sampling:

Perfection is unattainable. Grades in France are given on a scale of 20. A professor once explained to us that a score of "20 out of 20 was for God, 19 out of 20 was for the professor, and 18 out of 20 was a grade earned once every 10 years." In this age of incessant self-promotion and desire for exceptional accomplishments, it is refreshing to let go of the idea of perfection and to do something simply very well.

Bigger and more are not better. Whether dogs, cars, houses, or portions in restaurants, there is a point at which more is too much.

Interpersonal distance trumps fake closeness. To my naïve young mind, it was wrong to keep people at a distance with the formal "vous" pronoun in French. I wanted to make new friends! I learned otherwise when a postal clerk informed me, in front of a roomful of customers, that she and I had not raised cows together, and so
we should not use the informal "tu" pronoun with each other.

"Tu" is always reciprocal between adults and reflects a mutual desire for closeness. The "vous" form of address acknowledges the reality that one's interaction with another individual will remain on the professional or functional level (as when selling or purchasing stamps).

**Free public education at all levels is possible.** When my French classmates referred to "work," they often meant reading, researching, and writing, not earning money through full-time or part-time jobs. This was new to a young American.

In France, if you could pass the tests, tuition was free — nothing to pay but a small registration fee. There were even highly exclusive, yet public, colleges where students were housed and received living expenses. This is not the case in the United States, where funding for public colleges has decreased at the federal, state, and city levels, and students from families of modest means incur enormous debts to pursue higher education.

**Never apologize for the arts.** I studied literature while I was in France. When I told Americans this, sometimes they would ask, "What are you going to do with that?" This never happened in France. French high-school teachers and college professors were well regarded and decently paid, at least when I lived there. As far back as the 17th century, French identity has been intertwined with the arts. The state invests in and supports musicians, actors, writers, dancers, and visual artists — and the public benefits from that investment.

**Seduction is not always about sex.** My years in Paris were not about being swept off my feet by a Frenchman (or even another Hemingway). Yet I was seduced again and again in Paris — by the bridges over the Seine, by the parks, by the roofs and the gray-blue sky, by the view from seats at the very top of the Paris Opera's Palais Garnier, where you could watch the luster of the chandelier while Chagall's figures danced on the ceiling, and the performers seemed so far off they looked like singing ants.

**Hold the door open.** Of the many things I missed from my life in
Paris when I returned to the States, one detail stands out. When you enter or exit certain Métro stations, those with doors, it is customary to hold the door ajar a second or two for the next person. You don’t even need to look at the person, but the gesture of holding the door open indicates an awareness that there are other people on the journey, and that it is good to make the trip a bit easier for the person following you. Fraternité, if you will.

I am not suggesting that Paris is perfect. Given the history of wars, massacres, and violence in France and its former colonies, every cobblestone in Paris has been metaphorically or literally drenched in blood. Paris appears beautiful to visitors partly because its suburbs are neglected. Racial, religious, and economic injustice thrive there. And during the past few decades, there has been diminishing support for the arts and education.

Hemingway was a carnivore, I am a vegetarian. Yet we were two hungry Americans drawn to a place of beauty, history, and cruelty; two people trying to escape the narrowness of what we were told were certitudes, but which deep inside we sensed were lies. We were, each of us, looking for a new language — and each of us found sustenance in Paris.

Karen Sullivan is an assistant professor of French at Queens College of the City University of New York and is on the faculty at the CUNY Graduate Center.
A Manhattan Project Veteran Had a Unique View of Atomic Bomb Work

JULY 26, 2015

Grace Notes

By JAMES BARRON

Benjamin Bederson turned past the page in the diary from long ago, the page he had burned a hole through, and mentioned things he had done since that summer of 1945.

“Was an experimental atomic physicist,” he said. “Worked as a professor at New York University, taught almost every course in physics, was editor in chief of the American Physical Society and helped usher physics journals into the electronic age.”

He left out the part about helping to usher in the atomic age — the part about testing the ignition switches for the atomic bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki on Aug. 9, 1945. The part about having been one of the lowest-ranking soldiers assigned to the Manhattan Project, the huge research-and-development effort that delivered the first atomic devices, and as a corporal or a private in his early 20s, one of the youngest. The part about having been one of the few soldiers sent to key spots at key moments as the work progressed.

“That makes it sound a little grandiose,” Dr. Bederson, now 93, said modestly.

He did not even have his bachelor’s degree then, having suspended his undergraduate work at City College of New York to join the Army Signal Corps as a civilian. Before long, he was drafted, and after three days of basic training in Atlantic
City, the Army sent him to Illinois and Ohio — and then canceled the program it had put him in to learn electrical engineering. His commanding officer had heard that something called the Manhattan Project was looking for soldiers, and told him to apply.

“He knew I was a loudmouthed New Yorker,” said Dr. Bederson, who grew up in the Bronx. “He said, ‘Here’s your chance to get back to New York.’ ”

But it turned out that was not the case. “The next thing I knew,” Dr. Bederson said, “I was in Oak Ridge, Tenn. I was nonplused.”

Oak Ridge was booming, with as many as 45,000 people living and working there, and — according to the Atomic Heritage Foundation — consuming just over 14 percent of all the electricity generated in the United States.

Why they were such power hogs was a mystery, but Dr. Bederson noticed what appeared to be distillation plants.

“I thought they were making sour mash to drop on the Germans, get them all drunk,” he said. He guessed wrong, of course: “I found out later those were distillation plants. They were distilling U-235 from U-238.” U-235 is the isotope that can be used to fuel reactors and make bombs.

Dr. Bederson was assigned to a unit called the Special Engineering Detachment and transferred again, this time to Los Alamos, N.M. There, he worked on developing ignition switches for the bombs. In the spring of 1945, there were more orders and more travel, first to the base in Utah where bomber pilots were trained, then to Tinian, the Pacific island from which the B-29s known as Enola Gay and Bockscar took off. His assignment was to test the switches for the bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki.

So there he was, 7,800 miles from home, on an island about the size of Manhattan that had its Broadway, its numbered avenues, its 42nd Street, its Riverside Drive, even its Central Park.

“It is ironic,” he said dryly.
Tinian had been laid out that way in 1944, after the Allied forces seized it in the invasion of Saipan, but the Seabees who did the construction work had no idea the Manhattan Project was coming.

Of the thousands of people who worked on the Manhattan Project during the war, Dr. Bederson was apparently one of the few soldiers who were privy to its overall scope — that it involved enriched fuel for a bomb and, with the war in Europe over by mid-1945, that the first target would be Japan.

“He was like the special student who was picked out from among the other students,” said Owen Pagano, program manager at the Atomic Heritage Foundation in Washington. “There were other SEDs who were involved in other aspects of the project but did nowhere near the significant work that he did,” he said, referring to members of the Special Engineering Detachment.

Dr. Bederson’s work was singled out by no one less than J. Robert Oppenheimer, who was the scientific head of the Manhattan Project and is often called the father of the atomic bomb.

“The final successful operation of the Nagasaki bomb was testimony to the fact that your work had been well done,” Oppenheimer wrote in a letter of recommendation.

Mr. Pagano said Dr. Bederson was one of 15 to 20 Manhattan Project veterans who attended a recent reunion.

“He’s almost this — I don’t want to say Forrest Gump character,” Mr. Pagano said. “He wasn’t going around like Forrest Gump was, having all these different jobs and experiences, but there were very few Manhattan Project veterans who knew about the other sites that were involved, knew the overall scope, not only worked at Los Alamos but got to go to Tinian and help prepare the actual bomb itself.”

Dr. Bederson spent his childhood in the Bronx — and eight months, around the time he turned 11, in Russia. “I hated it,” he said. On returning to the Bronx, “a relative put us up in the Coops,” a housing complex formally known as the United Workers Cooperative Colony. It was, he said, “a Communist neighborhood, or at least a Communist-sympathizing neighborhood — anything from pink to red.”
"But that's another story," he said.

So is his account of David Greenglass, whose sister, Ethel Rosenberg, was executed as a spy. Greenglass testified in 1945 that he delivered atomic secrets to his brother-in-law, Julius Rosenberg.

Dr. Bederson remembers Greenglass as "a machinist making molds for lenses" on the bombs. "I knew he was pretty radical," he said. "He made no bones about it. He was in the next bunk to mine at Los Alamos. We had arguments." Things became so heated and Dr. Bederson and another bunkmate became "so disgusted" with Greenglass that they asked for a transfer.

Dr. Bederson had a security clearance, which is why he burned the hole through that page in the diary. It was the entry for Aug. 6, 1945, the day of the Hiroshima bombing. When he reread it a couple of weeks later — after the world had changed — he felt he had written more than he should have written about the bomb itself.

Even now, he will not say exactly what was in the sentence he deleted. Secrets are secrets.

Dr. Bederson said he believed in the atomic bomb.

"It must have saved far more lives than it cost," he said. "The military in Japan didn't want to end the war." But he said he had written in his diary that "there should be total nuclear disarmament and countries would be smart enough to do it."

The diary's place these days is in a blue binder marked "Army" in his high-rise apartment in Greenwich Village. He skipped over a letter that began "Dear Mother and Dad" and was signed "Love, Benny."

Also in the binder was that letter of recommendation from Oppenheimer, who praised Dr. Bederson's "cleverness and ingenuity" in devising simple solutions to unexpected technical problems.

Dr. Bederson turned a page in the binder and paused at a photograph on Tinian of perhaps 30 people, lined up as if for a class picture.

"There are two Nobel Prize winners and two or three admirals in that photograph," he said.

"And," he said, "there's me. Third row, fifth from the left."
Geraldo Rivera looking to settle medical malpractice suit

By Julio Marsh

July 24, 2015 | 1:03am

Geraldo Rivera leaving Manhattan Civil Court. Photo: Gabriella Baez

MORE ON:
GERALDO RIVERA
'Stache house: Geraldo lists $3.75M NJ home

Geraldo Rivera, wife buy $5.6M Manhattan apartment

Celebrity 'Glee' club: Six breakout stars from the beloved TV show

Pretty little liars: 5 celebs who've bent the truth

Fox News personality Geraldo Rivera was in Manhattan Civil Court on Thursday for settlement talks in a medical-malpractice suit over a botched back surgery.

Rivera, 72, is suing the Hospital for Special Surgery on East 70th Street after he went in for the operation in 2010 and came out with a crippled right foot.

"I can't jog anymore. I can't play tennis, ski," he told The Post.

He also has trouble keeping up with his 10-year-old daughter, the Fox News Channel host said.

Bhalinder Rikhye, the hospital's lawyer, says Rivera injured himself post-surgery when he kicked the refrigerator door in his rehabilitation room.

Rivera is hopeful the hospital will settle.

"I promise any settlement I get, I promise I'm donating 100 percent to charity," specifically the College of Staten Island's Social Work School, he said.
Proposed Raise for Fast-Food Employees Divides Low-Wage Workers

JULY 26, 2015

The Working Life

By RACHEL L. SWARNS

Rebecca Cornick cheerfully chopped 120 heads of lettuce, wiped tables and rang up some Baconators, fries and chicken club sandwiches. For most of her customers, it was just another afternoon at a Wendy’s restaurant in the East New York section of Brooklyn. Not for Ms. Cornick. She was celebrating.

It was Thursday, one day after a state panel recommended that the minimum wage for fast-food workers be raised to $15 an hour, and Ms. Cornick was savoring congratulations from some regulars and the knowledge that soon, very soon, she would have more money to pay her bills.

But her jubilation dimmed after her shift, as soon as she stepped onto the street. On her stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue, the low-wage workers outside the fast-food industry will remain untouched by the pay increase. That includes her 24-year-old granddaughter, who earns minimum wage — $8.75 an hour — at a day care center two blocks from Wendy’s.

“It’s heartbreaking,” Ms. Cornick, 61, said. “So many people are desperate.”

Advocates for workers across the country cheered last week when New York became the first state to recommend a $15-an-hour minimum wage specifically for
fast-food workers. But in New York City, the decision has created a stark new divide between low-wage workers who will receive the boost in their paychecks and those who will not.

About 50,000 fast-food workers in New York City are expected to benefit from the wage increase, according to James Parrott, the chief economist at the Fiscal Policy Institute, a nonprofit research group. But about 1.25 million workers who earn less than $15 an hour do not work for fast-food chains and will not benefit, he said. In opposing the raise, fast-food companies also point to that gap, arguing that they will be unfairly required to increase wages while other businesses will not.

Near the bustling corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Linden Boulevard, that chasm is impossible to ignore.

Employees at the Checkers, the Denny's, the Wendy's and the Popeyes — fast-food chains with 30 or more restaurants nationally — will see their minimum wage increase to $10.50 in December, to $12 in 2016 and, gradually, to $15 in 2018, according to the panel's recommendations, which are expected to be put into effect by an order of the state's acting commissioner of labor.

But minimum-wage employees at the Home Furnishings Depot, at the mom-and-pop Jamaican eatery and at the gas stations and the bodegas will see their wages go up to $9 an hour in December, as a result of a previous accord, and remain there, unless the political stalemate in Albany over increasing the minimum wage statewide is broken.

Eve George, 29, isn't holding her breath. She works at the Home Furnishings Depot, just a block from Wendy's, and has been earning minimum wage for four years.

"As much as I would like it," Ms. George said of a statewide increase, "I don't think it's happening for the rest of us."

Advocates for low-wage workers are more optimistic, saying they believe the new mandate will spur pay raises in other sectors. Stephanie Luce, a professor of labor studies at the City University of New York, said the decision might lead "to pressure for the state to raise the minimum wage statewide" and inspire employees in other
industries to rally for better pay.

And for those who are getting the raise, Ms. Luce said, “the increased wages are definitely going to have a big impact in terms of people’s quality of life.”

Ms. Cornick was already imagining what it would be like to pay her rent on time, to have enough food in the refrigerator, to put money aside to buy life insurance.

“I’m giddy with happiness,” said Ms. Cornick, who has worked for Wendy’s for nine years and now earns $9 an hour.

But her celebration was tempered by worry for her granddaughter, Taniqua Hayes. The two share an apartment. But now the grandmother is moving forward, while the granddaughter feels left behind.

Ms. Hayes said she was thrilled for her grandmother, who participated in several fast-food protests and strikes.

But she feared that she would never get ahead on $8.75 an hour. “I was a little disappointed,” Ms. Hayes said of how she felt when her grandmother explained that the $15-an-hour mandate would apply only to fast-food workers.

Now, for the first time, Ms. Hayes and her colleagues at the day care center have begun looking wistfully at the big chain restaurants down the street. Maybe flipping burgers might get them closer to their dreams.

“A job is a job, right?” Ms. Hayes said. “As long as it pays good money.”

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Rachel Swarns would like to hear about your experiences in New York’s work world. Please contact her directly by filling out this brief form. She may follow up with you directly for an interview.

A version of this article appears in print on July 27, 2015, on page A15 of the New York edition with the headline: Proposed Raise for Fast-Food Employees Divides Low-Wage Workers.
Sally Gross, Choreographer of Minimalist Dances, Dies at 81

By BRUCE WEBER  JULY 24, 2015

Sally Gross, a leading avant-garde dancer and choreographer whose minimalist works helped propel the postmodern dance movement, died on Monday in Sag Harbor, N.Y. She was 81.

Her death, from ovarian cancer, was confirmed by her daughters, Sidonia and Rachel Gross.

In the early 1960s Ms. Gross participated in the workshops and concerts organized by the Judson Dance Theater, the Greenwich Village collective around which the postmodern dance movement coalesced. Avoiding the theatrics, spectacle and glamour of traditional concert dance, the postmodernists believed in the sanctity of movement itself, emphasized simplicity and focused on form as opposed to style.

Ms. Gross's work, built from the fundamentals of spare, precise movement and gesture and staged with a painter's eye for figures in space, was emblematic. Inspired, she often said, by literature and art and by details of her own autobiography, she translated those elements into elliptical, impressionistic tableaux.

In long-gestating pieces reliant on improvisatory rehearsals — for soloists (often herself), pairs and limited ensembles (she had a small company of dancers and sometimes performed with one or both of her daughters) — Ms. Gross deployed simple props and sets (though she was fond of dramatic lighting), and occasional original music and spoken narration.
But her primary tools were repeated movements, often recapitulating pedestrian activities like walking or standing up and often rendered in continuous sequence as a smooth, deliberate narrative in motion. As composers often say that silence is an element of music, so stillness was also a significant contributor to her aesthetic, though Ms. Gross was aware that a dance could only approach or suggest absolute stillness: Breathing, she explained, is movement.

She studied Buddhism and tai chi, and in her teaching she counseled students to focus on being concentrated, calm and collected, the “three C’s.” The documentary maker Albert Maysles titled his 2007 film about her work “The Pleasure of Stillness.”

Admired by critics and celebrated in the circumscribed world of postmodern dancers and choreographers — she won a Guggenheim fellowship and multiple grants from the National Endowment for the Arts — Ms. Gross was not a dance celebrity or a must-see ticket. Partly this is because she plied a singular path, working with a small number of dancers over many months of rehearsal, emerging with a show once a year.

Her work was seen at some of New York’s leading dance spaces, including the Joyce Theater and the Dia Art Foundation in SoHo, but much of it was rehearsed and presented to tiny audiences at her home in the West Village in Manhattan.

“Sally Gross might have been a witch or a magician in other times,” the dance critic Jennifer Dunning wrote in The New York Times in 1987. “All she has to do to weave a spell, it seems, is walk onto the stage and begin to move in that strangely drowsy but focused way of hers. The elements are simple, with much of the dancing performed in silence.”

Ms. Gross’s dances, she added, “have the kind of powerful eloquence that comes with art pared down to its most lucid essentials.”

Sarah Freiberg was born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan on Aug. 3, 1933. Her parents were Jewish immigrants from Poland — her father was a fruit peddler — and as a girl she spoke Yiddish at home.

She graduated from Washington Irving High School and Brooklyn College. Her interest in dance, she said, was piqued at summer camp when she was a teenager. In
the 1950s she studied technique, composition and improvisation with the choreographer Alwin Nikolais at the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse.

She was married to Theodore Gross. He died in 1966. In addition to their two daughters, she is survived by a sister, Edythe Green, and three grandchildren.

In the early 1960s, while she was dancing with the Judson group, she began teaching a class in movement, largely for women, that met in her apartment. It continued for more than 40 years with some of the same participants.

"I had done lots of things that I thought were really appropriate for people who were nondancers but wanted to dance," Ms. Gross recalled in 2001 about the genesis of the class. "Wanted to move, more than dancing. I think about myself the same way, as moving. Sitting, standing and lying down. Everybody at that point was probably in their 30s and they could do a great deal. I was there to push them. Many of them had had children and just needed to feel as good as their kids felt."

Some 40 years later, the dozen or so students were in their 50s, 60s and 70s.

"I don’t think there’s any end to investigating oneself, because we are constantly changing," she said. "So I’m here to change with them."

Ms. Gross continued to dance and to produce new work into her 70s. In 2007, writing in The Times, the critic Gia Kourlas described a solo piece by Ms. Gross, "Songs," set to two Leonard Cohen compositions. "‘Songs’ starts as Ms. Gross steps onto a horizontal patch of white light," she wrote. "As the lyrics begin with ‘Well, my friends are gone, and my hair is gray,’ Ms. Gross slowly arches a foot while subtly twisting her torso; with one hand on her abdomen, the other curls to clutch the side of her head. For all its limp weightiness, the solo, which emphasizes Ms. Gross’s long bare feet and articulate fingers, is arresting cool."

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