Here's how a $625,000 'Genius Grant' winner says he achieved success

Ta-Nehisi Coates, an author and national correspondent for The Atlantic, became one of 24 individuals to win this year's MacArthur "Genius Grant."

The prestigious award includes $625,000 for each winner to spend over the next five years.

This is one of many achievements for the venerable writer, who is also a New York Times best-selling author, visiting professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and journalist-in-residence at the City University of New York.

But the path to success for Coates, who often writes about race identity, systemic racial bias, and mass incarceration, has been a long one. His key to success?

Perseverance, he says.
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Seven years ago, he started writing for The Atlantic after he was laid off from TIME magazine, and felt like he'd hit a creative block, according to The Baltimore Sun.

"I knew what kind of writer I wanted to be. I was not becoming that writer," he later said in an interview with The Atlantic. "I was looking for a breakthrough, and I was not finding a breakthrough at all. I was banging my head against the walls and nothing was coming out."

He describes his first year at The Atlantic as frustrating one, as he was finishing his "holy book," a memoir about growing up in West Baltimore called "The Beautiful Struggle." Coates was also working on his first, 8,000-word piece for the magazine.

"It was just hell," Coates said. "I was under a great degree of stress. I think I gained like 30 pounds (then)."
But that stress, Coates says, is exactly what pushed him to his limits as a writer, forcing him to build his writing "muscles" and score a breakthrough. When he finished his piece and book that year, he was able to reflect and see a positive change in his work.

"It clear that these were not things I was capable of doing before," he said. "The writing was very, very different. The sentences had much more power. I think a lot of that had to do with the stress I was under."

He also credits his writing skills to practice. And while "practice makes perfect" may be an age-old dictum, Coates says that his struggles combined with writing and repeated revisions helped him become the writer he is today.

"I never really get to that perfect thing that was in my head," he said. "I always consider the entire process about failure, and I think that's main reason a lot of people don't write."

Watch Coates' full interview with "The Atlantic" here.

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NOW WATCH: This 'genius' playwright is giving free performances from the hottest show on Broadway
Daily News, NYC officials honor 11 educators with Hometown Heroes in Education awards

BY EIN CHAPMAN, LISA L. COUANGELO / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Thursday, October 1, 2015, 10:56 PM

Dedicated city education professionals receive well-deserved Heroes in Education awards Thursday.

Eleven unsung educators were honored Thursday at the Daily News' Hometown Heroes in Education awards for their tireless dedication to students.

The diverse group included teachers who bring math and science to life, a counselor who refuses to give up on incarcerated teens and a physical therapist who helps disabled youngsters feel like part of the crowd.

They were feted with a star-studded breakfast at the Edison Ballroom, where winners received their awards from local luminaries.

The winners shared their stories with families, friends and co-workers who were invited to join the celebration.

Mayor de Blasio attended to present a special award to the family of Patrick Wannikhof, a beloved young Bronx teacher who was killed in an accident while biking cross country to raise money for charity.

"In terms of what matters in our society today, educators are the real heroes," said de Blasio. "In terms of making a society that works, our educators are the front line. They are the soldiers. They are the people who are changing this society profoundly."

Daily News Honors Hometown Heroes in Education

NY Daily News
Daily News President and Editor-in-Chief Colin Myler said it's impossible to overestimate the impact teachers make on kids' lives.

"Being a teacher can change so many lives. It can touch a young person in a way that stays with them as they move through life," Myler said. "We never forget those moments with our first teachers. They taught us so many things. So many things that go beyond just the curriculum, things about life, things about respect, things about courtesy."

De Blasio joined an impressive group of presenters, which included Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina, CUNY Chancellor James Milliken and musician Daryl McDaniels, DMC of the seminal Queens hip hop group Run DMC.

"Families can't do it alone — that's why God gave us teachers," DMC said from the podium, before presenting teacher Rockeita Graham with her award. "The teachers are truly superheroes."

NY1's Pat Kiezen took a break from his morning anchor duties to serve as emcee of the event.

New York City Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina speaks at Thursday's event to honor 11 educators.

"The winners are never off the clock," said Kiezen. "There's always something going on even if they're at home in the evening, they're planning a lesson. They really are educators 24 hours a day."

Farina echoed those sentiments.

"This is not a nine-to-three job. It's not a nine-to-five job. It's not a nine-to-six job," Farina said. "It's 24/7. Because we know intuitively, because we make a difference."

Top officials from the unites representing teachers and principals — including United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew — also attended to honor the winners.

The News received more than 200 nominations from New Yorkers across the five boroughs. A panel of expert judges helped select the winners.

ON A MOBILE DEVICE? WATCH THE VIDEO HERE.
City College of New York Professor Awarded Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship

India West Staff | Posted: Thursday, October 1, 2015 11:00 am

NEW YORK — Dr. George John, a professor of chemistry at The City College of New York, recently received a 2015-2016 Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Fellowship.

The Indian American professor will spend four months in India teaching and conducting research on a project titled “Introducing Materials Science to Managers through Biomimicry” at the L.M. Thapar School of Management, in Dera Bassi.

John is developing a course on biomimetic materials for business managers and leaders. It is aimed at helping them develop the tools to understand and appreciate the technical complexities in sustainable materials development, especially with increasing advancements in technology.

In addition, John will teach several short courses and lead seminars at other institutions in India. The topics include, “Biomimetic Materials: Innovation Can Be Inspired by Nature,” “Biorefinery: A Design Tool for Green and Sustainable Materials,” and “Valorization of Biomass into Multifunctional Materials.”

These courses introduce students and researchers to a new area of research while encouraging the growth of local traditional industries and focusing on regional resources-based technologies.

John’s most recent work includes leading a City College team of researchers in the Division of Science that has developed an eco-friendly biodegradable green “herding” agent that can be used to clean up light crude oil spills on water. Their research was published in the journal Science Advances.
Preparing for the storm: What to do before a hurricane hits

BY NICHOLAS PARCO / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Thursday, October 1, 2015, 4:20 PM

Storm clouds pass over the top of the Empire State Building.

It is always important to prepare for inclement weather before it hits your neighborhood.
In the case of a hurricane, experts agree that getting essential items days in advance is the way to go.

Michael Harriott, the Emergency Management Coordinator for Union Beach, N.J. — a town that was decimated by Superstorm Sandy — said that in the case the town has to evacuate, people should have the following items in a pre-made kit: Canned goods, hygiene products, important paperwork, blankets and pillows.

"We need them to have these items ready in case of an evacuation," Harriott said.

But having a charged cell phone, a flashlight and food for three days should also be priorities for anyone preparing for bad weather, said Nicholas Coch, a professor of both sedimentology and coastal geology at Queens College.

And always have an idea of when exactly you will be hit.

"Always keep an eye on where the storm is," Coch said.

Preparing your property is often overlooked, but can help limit damage to surrounding homes. Items that are left outside in a storm have the potential to wreak havoc during and after the worst has passed, according to Coch.

"A lot of damage that occurs is secondary," Coch said. "Removing all materials from yards and patios is a must."
A dark sky rests over a home in the Bronx.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has an emergency preparedness and response page on its website for people who live in the path of a hurricane.

Here are the items they suggest having to prepare for a storm:

**Food and Medicine**

Clean containers for water

At least 5 gallons of water per person (which should be enough to last 3 to 5 days)

A 3 to 5 day supply of food that doesn't go bad (like canned food)

Baby food or formula

Prescription medicines

**Safety Items**

First aid kit and instructions

Fire extinguisher

Battery-powered radio

Flashlights

Extra batteries

Sleeping bags or extra blankets

Supplies to make drinking water safe (like iodine tablets or chlorine bleach)

**Personal Care Products**

Hand sanitizer
Wet cleaning cloths (like baby wipes) in case you don't have clean water

Soap

Toothpaste

Tampons and pads

Diapers

**Make an Emergency Car Kit**

Food that doesn't go bad (like canned food)

Flares

Jumper cables (sometimes called booster cables)

Maps

Tools, like a roadside emergency kit

A first aid kit and instructions

A fire extinguisher

Sleeping bags

Flashlight and extra batteries

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TAGS: hurricane joaquin, lists, nyc weather
Behind the Rise in Mass Incarceration

OCT. 2, 2015

To the Editor:

Re “The Prison Problem” (column, Sept. 29):

David Brooks is correct that ending the drug war will not end mass incarceration. But doing so would hardly be a trivial change.

Drug offenses account for half the federal prison population today. Reducing mandatory drug penalties would scale back the excessive use of incarceration and would also have a significant effect on the disproportionate number of African-Americans and Latinos imprisoned for these offenses.

It’s true that most of America’s prisoners are held in state facilities. But even at the state level, 200,000 people are locked up for a drug offense. In addition, drug abuse accounts for a significant number of people sent to prison for technical violations of parole or probation, as well as for property and violent crimes committed because of untreated addictions.

The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010, which scaled back the unfair sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine, has made a difference in thousands of lives.
The success of this and other measures to mitigate the drug war are helping to contribute to the “bipartisan moment” on criminal justice reform that holds the potential for substantial reductions in the number of people behind bars.

JEREMY HAILE

Washington

The writer is federal advocacy counsel at The Sentencing Project.

To the Editor:

Mass incarceration grew out of harsh sentencing for drug offenses, mandatory minimum sentences that required imprisonment for less serious crimes, and very long sentences, especially for violence. This may be the “popular” narrative, as David Brooks asserts, but it is also the consensus of the National Academy of Sciences report on incarceration that systematically reviewed all the scholarly research.

To minimize, as Mr. Brooks does, the effects of the war on drugs flies in the face of the evidence. Over the last four decades, incarceration rates for drug offenses increased tenfold, compared with a fourfold increase for all other crimes.

Similarly, it is deeply misleading to claim that prosecutors simply became more aggressive over this period, without acknowledging that stricter penal laws provided them new leverage to negotiate more punitive outcomes.

To reduce the country’s needlessly high incarceration rates, we must recognize the crucial role of our policy choices to launch a war on drugs, to enact mandatory minimums and to embrace very long prison sentences that are largely unknown outside the United States.

JEREMY TRAVIS

BRUCE WESTERN

Cambridge, Mass.

The writers are co-editors of the National Academy of Sciences report. Mr. Travis is president of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and Mr. Western is director of the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School.
CUNY faculty fights for new contract

Stephen Johnson | 10/1/2015, 5:10 p.m.

Amsterdam News Staff

With so many unions awarded contracts since Mayor Bill de Blasio took office, many New Yorkers have forgotten about CUNY’s faculty and staff.

Thursday morning, members of the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, the union that represents the City University of New York’s faculty and staff, protested outside of CUNY Chancellor James B. Milliken’s home on the East Side of Manhattan. Workers have chosen to protest outside of his home early in the morning because, according to the PSC-CUNY, Milliken hasn’t “woken up” to the crisis involving academic quality at CUNY schools.

CUNY’s faculty and staff have been working without a contract for five years and haven’t received a raise in six years. Union members say that CUNY’s academic departments have struggled to recruit and retain faculty, with professors and advisers less able to give students the proper attention. Meanwhile, tuition has
gone up every year.

Workers, along with some student activists, want Milliken to deliver what they call a fair economic offer and allow implementation of their contract.

The AmNews spoke with Delores Jones-Brown, professor of law, political science and criminal justice at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the founding director of that school’s Center on Race, Crime and Justice. She related her experience at attempting to do more with less.

“We have a number of people who didn’t come up through the age and era of resistance, so many of them are just happy to have a job,” said Brown. “So we have experienced a significant amount of attrition.”

Brown said she’s seen faculty members leave for jobs at the University of Maryland, Washington State and other big-name criminal justice programs.

“We’ve been trying to recruit a permanent director since 2005,” Brown said about the Center on Race, Crime and Justice. “We’ve had several really promising candidates, but we couldn’t promise them the kind of salaries and benefits that the institution they came from had or the institution they eventually went to.”

Alexios P. Polychronakos, professor and chair of the Physics Department at City College and professor at the CUNY Graduate Center, echoed Brown’s sentiments on how “demoralizing” it is to try and maintain staff.

“We feel like second-class citizens,” Polychronakos told the AmNews. “Recruiting and maintaining the people has been difficult because we offer a salary that’s, frankly, not competitive.”

Polychronakos said that they try to entice new recruits by saying that they’re in the middle of negotiations and things will be better soon, but many are gone within the first three years once they realize salaries aren’t changing.

“We can speculate all we want, but we do not see any clear signs from anywhere that something dramatic is gonna happen,” said Polychronakos. “We hope for a fair contract that takes into account the cost of living and fair raises. That’s the least we should hope for because that’s common sense.”
Accidental New Yorkers: Grandparents Relocate

Older adults are retiring to New York. For some, the original impetus is an urgent request to help raise a grandchild, but the pull of city life keeps them here.

By RONNIE KOENIG  OCT. 2, 2015

Instead of spending their golden years baking in the sun, a growing number of grandparents are choosing a grittier spot to play out their third act — New York City. Not for them the early-bird special when dinner awaits at the latest hot spot and Broadway shows abound.

But for some, the impetus for uprooting is not the pull of city life, but an urgent request to help raise a grandchild. These later-in-life New Yorkers find they come for the children but stay for the city.

The other day, Mary Anne Swickerath, 74, a retired newspaper writer, was pushing her granddaughter in a stroller down Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, Brooklyn, the affluent and family-oriented neighborhood’s main drag. She looked the part of a true New Yorker, dressed in all black with a cross-body purse and dark sunglasses.

But until 2013, she was living in Ocoee, Fla. A week before her granddaughter, Ramona, was born, Mrs. Swickerath, a widow, sold her house for less than $100,000 and moved, sight unseen, into a one-bedroom, third-floor walk-up in Brooklyn where the rent is $2,775 a month — more than any mortgage payment she ever made on her Florida home.
"I said, 'I'm going to be open,'" Mrs. Swickerath said. "Life is about change. Although I lived in the same house for 40 years, married to the same man for 44, had the same job, I think it's important to keep growing. I thought it would be very good for me, and I knew it'd be good for my grandchild. My own kids turned out well. I have a good track record!"

Mrs. Swickerath's daughter, Carla Swickerath, 42, a chief executive officer of Studio Libeskind, the architectural firm, and her partner, David Stockwell, 40, a senior associate at Libeskind, love having Mary Anne just blocks from their home near Prospect Park.

"I saw the move as another great adventure for her," Carla Swickerath said. "She's from Mobile, Ala., and after college she joined the Peace Corps and taught English in Nigeria. She has always loved New York, and it just made sense."

Mrs. Swickerath tended Ramona part time for the first six months, and then switched to providing full-time weekday care. "My daughter and I thought we'd give it a year and see how it goes," she said, "and we never really looked back."

Grandparents are flocking to cities precisely because their adult children need them," said Van C. Tran, an assistant professor of sociology at Columbia University. "The younger generation are working more hours than ever before, so they desperately need their parents to be around," he said. "This is why the help that the grandparents provide is so crucial. I think we're in a very interesting cultural norm-shifting moment because this was not expected or acceptable even a generation ago."

And while previous generations left cities to give their children fresh air and a better life, many millennials and Gen Xers don't view the suburbs as aspirational places to raise children. But they do need babysitters.

Meris Zittman, the president of International Artists Group, a Miami-based talent agency, was summoned to Manhattan seven years ago by her daughter, Nicole Hart, when she and her husband, Michael Hart, were expecting. Ms. Hart and Mr. Hart are in their 40s; she's in advertising sales, and he's a building developer.

Ms. Zittman, who had long lived in Kendall, Fla., complied with the request, but
with the intention of trying out the job of nanny before committing.

"My daughter told me she'd give me three months to decide, but after two weeks she had to know," said Ms. Zittman, who prefers not to reveal her age. "I said, 'I'm not ready to make that decision.' I had a business. But I finally decided to stay, and I'm happy I did."

Ms. Zittman sold her Florida home in 2011 and now resides at New York by Gehry, a residential tower at 8 Spruce Street in Lower Manhattan where she rents an alcove studio for about $3,000 a month. She took care of her grandson Dylan from the day he was born until he started attending school at age 3, keeping up with her talent agency while he napped and at night.

About 10 percent of the residents of the 899 rental units of New York by Gehry are 60 and older, said Scott Walsh, the vice president of residential leasing for Forest City Ratner Companies, the developer of the skyscraper.

"In many cases," he said, "it means living closer to their families and grandchildren in the city, plus New York by Gehry is where the action is. So many exciting things are happening in Lower Manhattan right now, with more to come. Many of our older tenants have expressed to us, 'Why stay in the suburbs when you could be here in the heart of it all?'

These days, Ms. Zittman takes Dylan, now a 7-year-old model and actor, on casting calls and is often enlisted to retrieve him and her two other grandsons, who also live in Manhattan, from after-school sports. Hopping on the subway and exploring New York with her boys is not an activity reserved for special occasions—it's a part of daily life.

Ms. Zittman keeps up the fast pace even when she's not with her family. A typical day includes working out with a personal trainer in her building's gym, attending a performance by a client, and meeting friends for lunch or dinner at spots like the Park in Chelsea or Machiavelli on the Upper West Side.

"I'm happy I did this whole thing," she said. "And now I'm here in New York. That's the best part."
Between 2009 and 2013, 1.2 percent of New Yorkers age 62 and older did not reside in the city in the previous year, according to an analysis of census and other data by Susan Weber-Stoger, a researcher in the sociology department at Queens College. And while the majority of these new city residents came from abroad or other parts of the United States, real estate agents report increasing traffic from the suburbs, older clients leaving behind homes they had resided in for many years in order to give New York a whirl.

Peggy Dahan, an associate broker for Siderow Residential Group, has noticed a pattern: Grandparents try out New York by renting first and then, after realizing they feel at home here, decide to purchase. “I see more families staying in Manhattan,” she said. “Grandparents want to be closer to the kids and grandkids, so they are moving to Manhattan and enjoying the easier lifestyle and amenities.”

For Julie Rice, a founder of SoulCycle, the fitness chain, starting a business while raising a baby would have been almost impossible without the help of her mother-in-law, Bonnie Rice, 68. Ms. Rice relocated from the suburbs of Baltimore to become her granddaughter Phoebe’s full-time nanny about a decade ago.

“My daughter-in-law asked if I would consider moving to New York City to be their nanny,” Ms. Rice said. “She and I had developed a very close relationship and my son told me it was her idea.”

Now both in their early 40s, Julie Rice and her husband, Spencer, the chief marketing officer of SoulCycle, rented an apartment for Bonnie seven blocks away from their home on the Upper West Side. Ms. Rice would show up in the morning at 7 a.m. and take care of Phoebe, now 10, until one of them relieved her at 7 p.m.

“Those were long days,” Ms. Rice says. “I did everything. I know where almost every path leads to in Central Park. I changed about 10,000 diapers. It was exhausting, but I was spending every day with my granddaughter and I wouldn’t have changed it for the world.”

Her crash course in raising a city baby had an unexpected side effect.

“All of a sudden I felt like I was a New Yorker!” Ms. Rice said. “I joined all the museums, I rode the bus and the subway everywhere. My apartment had a bit of a
roach problem, but whose doesn’t?"

After two years of taking care of Phoebe full time, she decided to put down roots in New York. She rented another apartment and, in 2007, sold her home in Maryland.

"I started to meet people my age in my building and made friends," Ms. Rice said. "I joined a mah-jongg group and we play for five dollars once a week. I've dated some men but so far nothing has stuck." Now a grandmother to four city children, she has retired from nannying but is still a frequent presence in the lives of her children and grandchildren.

"I just lend a hand when my kids need me — and they need me a lot!" she said.

"There's a new tradition of upward social mobility that revolves around staying put in cities, which are more vibrant than ever before," said Mr. Tran, the assistant professor. "The younger cohort, they don't want to drive — they want to walk places and feel connected. And connecting with their parents is part of that experience."

The daughters of Jose Vidal, 63, and his wife, Angeles, 69, had been trying for years to convince them to leave Palm Coast, Fla., and join them in the new frontier of Bushwick, Brooklyn.

It took coinciding events to make them agree to the plan. Their daughter Beatriz Vidal, and her husband, Fabrizio Uberti Bona, both 40 and senior managing directors of Citi Habitats, found out they were expecting a child at around the same time that Mr. Vidal received a diagnosis of lung cancer.

"Everyone was sad we were leaving and we were sad to go, having been in Palm Coast almost 30 years," said Angeles Vidal as she bounced her 4-month-old grandson, Fabrizio Jr., on her lap. "But at the end they said, your place is exactly there. And I can't imagine him being raised by someone else. He's a lucky child and we consider ourselves blessed. Eh, Papi?"

Their daughter and her husband had purchased a two-family townhouse in Bushwick, Brooklyn, in 2014 for $969,000. When the tenants in the rental unit wanted out of their lease, it seemed destined that Jose and Angeles should move in.
“They were here through my whole pregnancy. It was the five of us,” Beatriz Vidal said, counting her sister Rosana, “that drove to the hospital when I was in labor. It was like the Griswolds,” she joked, referring to the fictional traveling family of the various “Vacation” films.

Mr. Vidal credits the impending birth of his grandson with helping him get through his health ordeal.

“It pushes you, it gives you a dosage of good,” he said. “You just don’t think about it anymore. You think about the baby. So that was the total motivation.”

Now that his cancer is being treated, Mr. and Mrs. Vidal have begun to enjoy city life as a couple, most recently sampling authentic Greek cuisine in Astoria and strolling together through Central Park. Mr. Vidal has even found a second career as a project manager for an I.T. company.

“It’s something to look forward to,” he says. “I’m sleeping fast at night to get up.”

Rosana Vidal, 38, the president of Rosana Vidal Marketing, lives three blocks away from her family and is a fixture in their home and daily lives.

“My parents, I’ve never seen them this way,” said Rosana Vidal, who marvels at her father’s close relationship with his grandson. “The word in Spanish is compinche, the person you always hang out with — you’re one another’s sidekick. I’ve never seen them this happy.”

The Vidal’s sold the Florida house for $171,500 in August and now call Bushwick their only home.

Of course, these family-centric moves are not without their challenges.

“Life here is physically more demanding than I was used to,” Mrs. Swickerath said. “I felt disoriented at first. I had to learn how to navigate the transportation, I had never lived in a cold climate. But these were not big problems, just a series of small ones. More like puzzles to be worked out.”

She and her now 2-year-old granddaughter, whom she calls Moni, have become connoisseurs of the city.
"Moni has art class; last spring we took a gardening class at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Her dad gardens on the roof so she was really into it."

The two take full advantage of the city and the unique experiences it offers. "We stroll through the Whitney. She was sitting there looking at a big de Kooning picture."

When she's not caring for Ramona, Mrs. Swickerath plies her own path in the city.

"I go see movies at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I just love walking down the street, there's so much available. One thing I love about New York is all the ethnic restaurants," she said, recalling a recent trip to Ivan Ramen on the Lower East Side. "Give me a good ramen place and I'm happy."

Just as this generation of parents celebrates the idea of raising children in a diverse environment, grandparents like Mrs. Swickerath see the value in it, too.

"I don't want to be around a bunch of people my own age," she said. "I like people my age, but I like a variety of people. That's more interesting. I like the whole multicultural thing about New York, about Brooklyn, in particular. There's life here, you know?"

A version of this article appears in print on October 4, 2015, on page RE1 of the National edition with the headline: Accidental New Yorkers.
CUNY union protests outside chancellor's apartment

Hundreds of CUNY faculty and staff chanted, carried ringing alarm clocks, and generally made a lot of noise at an early-morning Thursday "wake-up call" protest outside university chancellor James B. Milliken's high-rise apartment building.

"We're going to make sure that every person in this building hears. That every neighbor calls up J.B. and says, 'Get those people a contract,'" Professional Staff Congress president Barbara Bowen said into a bullhorn, just before 8:30 a.m.

CUNY's faculty and staff have worked without a contract for six years, and without contractual raises for five. Settling a contract requires the agreement of not only the union and university, but the state, which funds the largest part of CUNY's budget, and the city, as well.

Milliken has repeatedly said the contract is his "highest priority," but that the state Legislature did not provide resources to fund a contract in this year's budget.

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- Administration debates Council on

"As a practical matter, we must have the support of the state and city for our contract and, as important, we cannot responsibly make an offer or enter into an agreement we cannot pay for," he has said.

Governor Andrew Cuomo has said the contract is "up to CUNY."
Thursday's crowd stretched seven deep along 68th Street for most of the block between Third and Second avenues. Union spokesman Fran Clark said that over 700 members showed up. (P.S.C. represents 27,000 employees. Members of District Council 37, which represents about 10,000 non-professional CUNY employees, were also present.)

Protesters, many wearing academic gowns, banged pots and pans, hit drums and cowbells, blew horns and vuvuzelas, and chanted, "We're here, we're CUNY, get used it!" Many posed for photos with a cardboard cut-out of Milliken.

"We're gotta give a good hour of waking up to chancellor Milliken, if you want him to feel what we feel. He's got to feel a little heat, he's got to feel a little pressure, and that's our job," Bowen said. "We're going to fight and fight and fight until we have a contract worthy of our work."

CUNY spokesman Mike Arena represented the university on site, and was accompanied by Emily Gest of the public relations firm Rubenstein.

"We understand the frustration," Arena said. "The contract issue is our highest priority. The chancellor has repeatedly made that clear to the university community. We're working very diligently to identify resources to help us settle as soon as possible."

The protest lasted from about 8 a.m. to just after 9 a.m.
11 more arraigned in hazing death of Baruch College student

By David K. Li

October 1, 2015 | 12:59pm

Chun "Michael" Deng (left), a freshman at Baruch College (right), died in a hazing ritual.

Photo: Handout (left) and Helayne Seidman (right)

Eleven more young men were set to be arraigned in a Pennsylvania courtroom on Thursday in the hazing death of Baruch College fraternity pledge Michael Deng, officials said.

Jimmy Mei, Woo Cho, Jimson Cheong, Jonathan Yu, Julio Hewu, Justin Shen, Ka-Wing Yuen, Michael Chin, Norman Chuk, Peng Wang and Ronald Chu were all scheduled on hazing, conspiracy and hindering prosecution charges in Pocono Pines, according to Pocono Mountain Regional Police Chief Chris Wagner.

In total, 37 are expected to be charged in connection with the Dec. 8, 2015, death of Deng, a 19-year-old pledging Pi Delta Psi.

Deng was brutally beaten during a hazing ritual at a rented home in Tunkhannock Township, Monroe County prosecutors said.

He was knocked out and frat members didn't take him to a hospital for an hour, police said.
O'Bannon ruling allows 'amateurism' argument to continue—for now

by Aaron Leibowitz

In considering whether to pronounce NCAA amateurism dead as we know it, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals—tasked with hearing the O'Bannon vs. NCAA federal antitrust case—needed to weigh in on one question above all: If the athletes were paid, would that stop people from watching college sports?

On Wednesday, the NCAA got the ruling they wanted. Sort of.

The decision, which partially upheld a 2014 ruling by District Judge Claudia Wilken, was made after a three-judge panel heard testimony from sports management expert Daniel Rascher. Rascher argued that, despite opinion surveys several decades ago that showed opposition to allowing professional athletes to compete in the Olympics, the public kept watching the Games at the same rate.

The court wasn't buying that comparison. "The Olympics," the majority decision reads, "have not been nearly as transformed by the introduction of professionalism as college sports would be."

How the judges can claim to know this—an extreme hypothetical if ever there was one—is anyone's guess. In 1960, a member of the International Olympic Committee told Sports Illustrated that, without amateurism, the Olympics would "be destroyed within eight years." In reality, the Olympic transition away from amateurism was as seamless as anyone could've reasonably hoped for.

But that type of fear-mongering—speculative, cynical, based on nothing more than mere conjecture—is precisely what the NCAA is continuing to bank on.

In an effort to demonstrate that paying college athletes would cause an immediate cultural apocalypse, the NCAA presented a survey asking fans
whether they'd be more or less likely to watch college sports if athletes received pay above certain thresholds. The conclusion: "38 percent of respondents are less likely to watch or attend games if athletes are paid $20,000; 47 percent if athletes are paid $50,000; and 53 percent if athletes are paid $200,000."

Of course, the question could have easily been framed much differently. After all, the NCAA wasn't asking whether college athletes should be compensated for use of their names, images and likenesses (NILs), the issue at the heart of the O'Bannon case. And the survey didn't bother to offer any nuance as to how athletes could be paid—say by simply shifting money away from coaches' salaries and athletic department spending, at no cost to consumers.

Photo: AP

**How much longer can Mark Emmert and the NCAA dodge the legal bullets?**

Curiously, the plaintiffs opted not to counter the NCAA's study with one of their own, a decision which, according to several antitrust experts, may have been their undoing.

"The fundamental error was that they failed to produce a rebuttal study," said Marc Edelman, an associate professor of law at Baruch College's Zicklin School of Business. "Had such a study been produced, it would have been a lot more difficult for the Ninth Circuit to curtail the [district] court's ruling."

Which brings us to the specifics of the ruling itself. In its ruling, the court confirmed the part of Judge Wilken's decision which states the NCAA must be subject to scrutiny under the Sherman Antitrust Act's Rule of Reason—that by restricting athlete compensation up to the full cost of attendance, the NCAA is in violation of antitrust law.

"The statement that the NCAA is not the arbiter of amateurism is critical to this case, and that is where the student-athlete plaintiffs can claim victory," said Thomas Baker, an associate professor of sport law in the sport
management program at the University of Georgia. "Until today, 40-plus years of case law stated that we will not even apply antitrust law to regulations involving student-athletes."

• MORE: Northwestern moving on after union movement

At the same time, the court reversed Judge Wilken's ruling that college athletes could receive up to $5,000 per year in deferred payments for the use of NILs. Essentially, the court drew a very distinct line in the sand: Payment for athletes up to the full cost of attendance would not be anti-competitive; anything more, however, would sully the sanctity of amateurism.

The decision reads: "[I]n finding that paying students cash compensation would promote amateurism as effectively as not paying them, the district court ignored that not paying student-athletes is precisely what makes them amateurs."

The catch-22 is as glaring as it is curious: Amateurism is only as important (nay exists) insofar as the NCAA says it is (and does). The bedrock of amateurism, in the NCAA's own words, is "preserving an academic environment in which acquiring a quality education is the first priority."

We all know this is a farce, of course; many student-athletes, at least in high-profile football and men's basketball programs, are athletes first and students second. It's been proven time and time again, through academic scandal after academic scandal. Amateurism, then, is the ultimate red herring—a distraction from the fact that big-time college sports is a gargantuan industry, and that its prime employees aren't afforded so much as a crust crumb of the pie.

To his credit, one of the three Ninth Circuit judges, Sidney R. Thomas, seemed sympathetic to this fact, defending Wilkens' $5,000 proposal in what amounted to a partial dissent.

"Division I schools have spent $5 billion on athletic facilities over the past 15 years. The NCAA sold the television rights to broadcast the NCAA men's basketball championship for 12 years to CBS for $10.8 billion dollars," Judge Thomas wrote. "The NCAA insists that this multi-billion
dollar industry would be lost if the teenagers and young adults who play for these college teams earn one dollar above their cost of school attendance. That is a difficult argument to swallow.

Reading between the lines, it seems Judge Thomas is just about ready to change the system. And yet, by and large, America's courts continue to accept amateurism as a necessary prerequisite to the existence of college sports. The NCAA is so powerful, its product so deeply embedded in our national culture, that no one is willing to deliver that one knockout blow.

Baker, meanwhile, offered a stark analogy to explain the courts' hesitancy.

"We can agree there's this horrible, terrible person who we think deserves to die," Baker said. "But do you want to pull the lever on the electric chair? Do I want to pull the lever on the electric chair?"

As public opinion on the NCAA continues to shift, changes are happening in baby steps. The O'Bannon ruling (which either side could still pursue an appeal through an en banc review or, failing that, to the Supreme Court) changes almost nothing in the short term, with most schools having already implemented steps to pay athletes the full cost of attendance.

Photo: AP

**After helping Tom Brady escape the ax, can Jeffrey Kessler put the screws to the NCAA?**

"It certainly can be called a small step forward in the battle to overturn the NCAA principle of amateurism," Edelman said. "But this is not a huge step forward in any which way."

Nonetheless, the O'Bannon ruling may serve to open the door yet another crack for the next lawyer—in this case, Jeffrey Kessler, who represented Tom Brady in the Deflategate case. Kessler attended a class certification hearing on Thursday for a lawsuit against the NCAA, seeking a free market for the services of college football and men's basketball players. That may sound like a quantum legal leap, especially considering the Ninth Circuit's assertion that any payment above the cost of attendance..."
would be DOA. But if Kessler can achieve what the O'Bannon plaintiffs could not—produce a comprehensive (and compelling) consumer-demand study showing that fans will in fact continue watching college sports regardless of whether the players are paid—then he might have a shot.

"We've kicked the can down the road with this decision, but in a way that made the can bigger for student-athletes," Baker said. "How long can we keep going with this concept of amateurism? I would phrase it as, 'How long can we keep pretending?' The answer is a little while longer."
CSI power failure blamed on aging equipment; relief in the works

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. — The power outage that forced the shutdown of the College of Staten Island's Willowbrook campus Wednesday is being blamed on aging equipment in a campus substation that's slated to be rebuilt, college officials said.

The campus was up and running on Thursday.

All day and evening classes at CSI had to be cancelled Wednesday, due to a system-wide power outage that was caused by the "failure of an electrical substation," according to a notice posted on the college website.

Unlike other City University colleges, CSI is responsible for its own power system. While Consolidated Edison supplies power to CSI, it is funneled through a series of cables to a campus-run substation, where it is then distributed across CSI's 664-acre campus to supply electricity to the college's 36 buildings.

The substation and equipment, which is self-contained in a building at the rear of the campus, is at least 20 years old; the substation went online when the campus opened in 1993.

CSI President William J. Fritz said the Willowbrook campus approaches its 23rd anniversary, the infrastructure is beginning to show its age.

"With 2016 marking the 60th Anniversary of the College of Staten Island and the 23rd anniversary of the College's home on the Willowbrook campus, campus infrastructure is beginning to age while the growth of our student body and national accolades continue to surge," Fritz said.

The college has secured capital funding to replace and rebuild the substation, but the project is in the design stage, officials said.

Fritz said the substation project is vital to current campus operations, and is a required first step in the construction of the Interdisciplinary High Performance Computing Center on campus.

"The college has anticipated our future needs, and we currently have a new substation in the design phase. We hope to have the project completed within 18-24 months,"
'An Unlikely Union' author Paul Moses on his book, about Irish and Italian immigrants' rivalry in NYC

BY GINGER ADAMS OTIS / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Thursday, October 1, 2015, 10.00 AM

Any journalist who has ever been an author has lived through that uncomfortable moment when, for the first time, the tables are turned and you become the interview subject who's put on the hot seat.

I wrote about my experience with that for Page Views last month with the publication of my first book — and it seemed to strike a chord with a lot of first-time authors. So when I recently picked up the latest offering from Paul Moses, a veteran journalist and former Newsday editor, I
asked him to do the same experiment. Write down the five interview questions you wish you were asked, and how you would answer them.


1) Your book is subtitled "The Love-Hate Story of New York's Irish and Italians." Are there any love stories?

Yes, there are. In the years after World War II, the Irish and Italians intermarried in large numbers. The couples often met resistance from their families. Mary Macchiara told me a beautiful story about her late husband, Frank, the former schools chancellor. It seems that it took a while for Mary's father, a parks worker and bartender named Michael Collins, to warm up to Frank because he was Italian-American. But when he did, it was a dramatic moment.

Then there was the daughter of the famed detective Joseph Petrosino. Adelina was an infant when Petrosino was murdered while on a mission to Sicily for the NYPD in 1909. When she grew up, she married an Irish American, Michael Burke. Their daughter, Susan Burke, a retired high school administrator, tells her parents' love story. Also, Linda Cronin-Gross, a Brooklyn public relations executive, told of what happened when her father, Gerard Cronin, went to Rosedale to pick up her mother, Mary Gilotti, for their first date: Mary's father greeted him with a shotgun. It didn't scare off Gerard; he wound up marrying Mary.

I also tell the love story of two famous political radicals, Irish-American Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Italian-born Carlo Tresca. Though married to other people, they fell passionately in love in the midst of one of the most famous strikes in American history, the Bread and Roses strike in Lawrence, Mass. in 1912. They exchanged poetry and love notes, which fell into the hands of the yellow press after Tresca was arrested during a scuffle with police in Manhattan the following year. Their love didn't last; Tresca cheated on Flynn with her younger sister.

There are other Irish-Italian couples: Al Capone and his wife Mae Coughlin, for example. They married at St. Mary Star of the Sea Church on Court Street in Brooklyn and, of course, moved to Cicero, Illinois. They had a son with a serious ear problem and brought him back to New York for surgery in 1925. Capone took Christmas night off from his family obligations to help wipe out the leadership of Brooklyn's Irish mob, the White Hand. Mae was very loyal to her husband when he eventually went to Alcatraz prison.

2) OK, what about the "hate" part? How bad was it?
It was pretty bad. The problem was that when the Italians started coming to New York in big numbers around 1880, they were so poor that they were willing to work for much less than Irish laborers were earning, and for longer hours. The Irish had done a good job of establishing unions, and were naturally angry when Italians were brought in to break strikes on the waterfront or to do construction work for less. In a 10-year period, construction laborers in the New York area went from three-quarters Irish to three-quarters Italian. So there were fights — lots and lots of them. The newspapers called them "race wars." The Brooklyn Eagle reported on so many brawls between Irish and Italian crews laying down trolley tracks that it ran an editorial headlined, "Can't They Be Separated?"

That resentment spilled over into other arenas, like the church. People who were fighting it out in the streets over jobs and housing weren't going to join hands when they met in church. And they spoke different languages. Catholic pastors, mostly Irish, solved the problem by setting up separate services for the Italians in the basement. That only angered Italians more, especially their priests, and the Vatican took notice too.

There were also poor relations between the Irish-dominated NYPD and the Italian community, and Italian business leaders pushed hard for more Italian cops to be added to the force. Eventually, the Italians also rebelled against Irish-run Tammany Hall, too. Fiorello La Guardia was their champion. Quite a few Italians became Republicans, in part because they felt blocked in the Democratic Party.

3) You write that people you know warned you to be fair in this book. Given that your ancestry is on the Italian side, was it hard to be fair to the Irish?

Well, yes, I am half-Italian on my mother's side of the family, and my wife Maureen's ancestry is Irish. So I'd better be fair!

I found it important to understand where the Irish were
“An Unlikely Union: The Love-Hate Story of New York’s Irish and Italians” is out now from New York University Press.  

beginning to show that Catholics could be good Americans, the Italians showed up — terribly poor and, in the eyes of the Protestant establishment, superstitious and backward. So the Irish played a kind of older sibling role to the Italians: mentor but also tormentor. The Irish were the Italians’ gatekeepers: the clerk at the immigration office; the cop on the beat; the priest at the church; the nun in the school; the judge in court; the local pol.

4) Donald Trump has focused a lot of attention on immigration. Has that reminded you of anything in your book?

It certainly has. The arguments Trump made about Mexicans were also made against the Italians — the idea that they were morally unfit to be Americans. The Irish faced similarly biased attacks. In researching the book, I saw so many parallels between today’s immigrants and yesterday’s. It just jumped out of the old news accounts and correspondence.

It’s worth noting that eventually, the anti-immigrant argument got the upper hand and resulted in a 1924 federal immigration law that, in a blatant way, blocked Italians and other groups from southern and eastern Europe from coming to America. The Catholic Church and affiliated organizations like the Knights of Columbus opposed that, to no avail.

5) How can what you’ve written about the Irish and Italians apply to other ethnic groups whose numbers are on the rise in New York today?

I teach at Brooklyn College, where the student body is wonderfully diverse. In mentioning my book here and there on campus, I’ve noticed that some of the students find it hard to believe the Irish and Italians were ever at odds — they seem so closely tied nowadays. One of them said: “You mean like the Puerto Ricans and Dominicans?” That’s just it.

For all its glitter, New York remains a tribal city. People with differing cultures still have to work things out. When it does work out, it’s exhilarating. That’s why you have to love New York. But when does it work out? In short, the answer is that when people get to mingle and know each other as equals, social boundaries blur and fall away. They give way to friendship, and even to love.