In two festive commencement ceremonies held at the Javits Convention Center on Sunday, June 8, 2014, Monroe College President Stephen Jerome conferred Associate, Bachelor’s, and graduate degrees on more than 2800 students. It was Monroe’s 81st anniversary commencement exercises in a year where the college was recognized by US News and World Report in its “214 Best Colleges Rankings” for high graduation rates.

In his remarks to the graduates, President Jerome talked about how Monroe’s unique approach to higher education breeds student achievement. “What has never changed and never will,” he said, “is our formula for student success. We have a culture of caring and personalized service. We have a mission of providing access and opportunity. We serve students who are motivated to work hard to enrich their lives.”

The keynote speakers were Richard Harris, a real estate executive and alum of Monroe’s King Graduate School, and prominent defense attorney and former adjunct professor at the College, Joey Jackson, Esq.
Monroe College’s School of Education is expanding enrollment for its Bachelor of Science degree program in Early Childhood Education, to meet the increased demand for educators created by the introduction of universal pre-kindergarten program.

The new initiative is expected to provide free, high-quality, full-day pre-K to over 73,000 children in New York City by the 2015–2016 school year, beginning with some 53,000 in the fall of 2014. Monroe prepares students to become pre-kindergarten teachers by offering the required bachelor’s degree in early childhood education and assisting with thorough preparation for the state’s new Teacher Certification Exams. Students also gain double the amount of student teaching experience required by New York State, completing more than 500 hours of real-world instruction by working with children at local nursery schools, daycare facilities, and primary schools throughout the course of their studies.

The school also maintains a partnership with the AmeriCorps Jumpstart Program, an early childhood education organization that trains college students to serve preschool children in low-income neighborhoods, providing students with the opportunity to complete over 300 hours of teaching experience in pre-kindergarten classes, in exchange for tuition support or a direct salary. Monroe is one of 17 schools in the tri-state area to partner with Jumpstart.

“Students enrolled in our early childhood education program are in a position to capitalize on their real-world teaching experience and enter a field that is undergoing rapid expansion as the city implements its universal pre-kindergarten initiative,” said Stephen Jerome, President of Monroe College. “Our bachelor’s degree program prepares students for meaningful jobs as future educators by equipping them with the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to become successful, impactful teachers that can make a difference in the lives of others.”
Flushing Satellite Expands Class Offerings

Monroe College, which has been offering graduate courses in Flushing since 2012, will introduce undergraduate classes in psychology and communications beginning the fall semester. Students will have access to Monroe’s shuttle that provides free daily transportation from Flushing and Jamaica to its New Rochelle campus. Access to the main Bronx campus is through the #7 subway line. The Flushing satellite will begin classes in the master of criminal justice and master of public health programs this fall.

“The undergraduate program is designed to increase access to a quality education and make it easier for people who are limited by various other commitments and time restraints, to obtain a degree,” said Evan Jerome, Vice President of Admissions at the Flushing site. Jerome added that students will be able to benefit from the convenient class schedule, easy access to the other campuses and academic and personal support from the Flushing staff.

The undergraduate program will allow students to take two courses a week in Flushing and three classes at one of the college’s other campuses. Online classes are also available.

Accreditation Granted to School of Business and Accounting

In a letter to Monroe President Stephen Jerome dated May 16, the director of accreditation of the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) announced that the College’s business and accounting programs were now accredited.

Programmatic accreditation for the business and accounting programs at the Bronx and New Rochelle campuses is in addition to the institutional accreditation that College has been granted since 1990 by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Dean Linda Silva-Thompson noted, “the ACBSP recognition will make it easier for graduates of Monroe’s programs to transfer to other academic programs and to obtain employment with top firms.” This is the culmination of a two-year effort by members of the School of Business and Accounting as well as many College officials. Dean Silva-Thompson commented that granting of accreditation, “marks not the end, but the beginning of a process of continuing improvement that will result in ever stronger offerings by the School.”

The ‘Egg Man’ Retires

One of Monroe’s most productive employees is retiring, Vladimir Ioffe, 66, who immigrated to the US from Russia 25 years ago and has manned the breakfast counter in the King Hall cafeteria, for the last 12, served his final dish of eggs on June 30.

By the estimation of the Director of Campus Dining, Chef Joel Bren, Vlad has served 300 eggs/day or an unfathomable 750,000 eggs through his career at Monroe!

It’s hard for him to determine what percentage were over-easy, scrambled, fried, or ‘runny’, but the most popular morning taste at Monroe is bacon, egg, and cheese on a roll – or plate. “It’s hard to leave; I will miss Monroe,” he said. “It’s been my pleasure to serve the faculty, staff, and students and I will miss them. This has been my second home.”

Three Generations Graduate

Three generations of a family all graduated from the College at commencement ceremonies held at the Jacob Javitz Center on June 8.

Granddaughter Ayanna Hogg, studied at Monroe’s New Rochelle campus for the past two years, earning her AAS degree in culinary arts through the college’s School of Hospitality Management & the Culinary Arts. Mom Makeda Sabree, came to Monroe in 2010 and has now received her MBA, with a minor in health management and son, Mwalimu Sabree, came to Monroe in 2009 and graduated with a BBA in business management.

News and Notes:

Jose Santana, a Bachelor of Science in Information Technologies student received a $10,000 scholarship from the Harry G. Starr Endowment, which is under the auspices of the Lighthouse Guild, the leading not-for-profit vision and health-care organization. Jose, who is legally blind, was chosen based on his outstanding academic and personal achievements. Scholarships were awarded with accompanying grants of $10,000 each to 23 college-bound high school seniors and undergraduate college students across the country who are blind or visually impaired.

Undeterred in my Education – Surviving Cyberbullying – A Female Perspective summarizes Dr. Militza Vargas’s dissertation study to help explain cyberbullying practices among young women today. It is a book written from the perspective of four young women who survived cyberbullying and remained undeterred in their educational goals. The book provides information to help empower other young women dealing with cyberbullying so that they can complete their educational journey. Dr. Vargas is an Online Learning Counselor at the Bronx campus.

Caribbean woman who made waves in The Bahamas to battle racial discrimination and political and economic inequities were recognized at a screening of the “Womanish Ways, Freedom, Human Rights & Democracy: The Women’s Suffrage Movement in the Bahamas 1948–1962” documentary at the New Rochelle campus. Filmmaker Marion Bethel, a Nassau, Bahamas native, was on hand at event. The film, written and produced by Bethel and co-directed by Maria Govan, profiles five leaders of the Women’s Suffrage Movement in the Bahamas. The College hosted the screening and talk for the June celebration of National Caribbean Heritage Month.
Greater New York Culinary Challenge
A Great Success!

More than 30 students and area chefs converged on the Culinary Arts Center at Monroe College for the fourth annual Greater New York Culinary Challenge (GNYCC), an American Culinary Federation (ACF) sanctioned culinary competition. Monroe students competed for the coveted “Dean’s Cup” awarded to the student with the highest point score in a competition designed by Dr. Frank C. Costantino CEC CCE CCA AAC, Dean of the School of Hospitality Management and the Culinary Arts.

The competition featured 12 Monroe Culinary students competing in a one hour “mystery basket” format, where they had to prepare two portions of an entrée with ingredients not previously identified. North Hunterdon H.S. Skills USA student Courtney Boyle, a Monroe Culinary team member, took the Dean’s Cup with a silver medal, narrowly edging out Food and Finance HS, C-CAP student Nashali Rivera, and Bronx native, and James Monroe HS alumnus Kenia Bonner who finished second and third with silver medals respectively.

“It was an exciting competition and a very challenging format and the students did extremely well…it is clear they are getting an excellent education and culinary training at Monroe” said Chef Peter Dwyer CEC CCE, a Connecticut-based private chef and ACF judge. Bronze medals were won by Queen’s resident and Knox HS alumnus, Romario Henry, Food and Finance HS C-CAP student Carlesha Alston, Arizona C-CAP student Eyrricka Prescott, and Chicago C-CAP student Alisia Lilliebridge. Certificates were earned by Sasha Gay Heslop, Dominique Hodge, Keona Hogan, Brianna Kersey, and Urszula Kozlowski.

Besides the Dean’s Cup Competition, many other Monroe students and faculty competed. Rounding out the competition for Monroe, Chef Edward Moon CEC earned the high score on the day with a professional gold medal, for his Rhode Island inspired striped bass dish.

Monroe Culinary ended the 2013–2014 season with 77 competition medals, the Minor’s® Southern New Jersey Championship, and the Minor’s® Long Island Culinary Classic Championship, and the Minor’s® Hot Food Championship. Since April 2009, Monroe Culinary has earned 496 competition medals.