

ALUMNI NEWS

QUEENS COLLEGE • DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY • SPRING 2021



A Message from the Chair



Larissa Swedell

It has been nearly a year and a half since our last newsletter, and much has changed since then. We were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, and it had far-reaching and often devastating consequences for us all, including many in the borough of Queens. Our hearts go out to all who have lost loved ones during this time.

Queens College went remote on March 13, 2020, and virtually all our interactions, among ourselves and with our students, have been through an electronic medium since that time. Only a handful of us have been to campus this year, and to do so still requires multiple levels of safety protocols and permissions. Thankfully, the future is now looking brighter and we are planning for over a third of our courses to be held partially or mostly in person in Fall 2021.

We concluded the Spring 2021 semester with our annual Honors and Awards Ceremony, in which we congratulated our next crop of outstanding graduating majors and presented our next set of well-deserved awards to our students. We have a great summer lineup of courses, and we look forward to seeing many of our students in person in the fall!

As always, we appreciate your support. The pandemic-related budget cuts have hit us all, and we currently have no institutional funds for our teaching collections or other needs that will arise once we are back in person. Please donate by following [this link](#).

Best wishes,

Larissa Swedell
Chair of Anthropology

Make a Donation

To make a donation, please send a check (*designated to the Department of Anthropology*) to

Queens College Foundation
Kiely Hall, 9th Floor
65-30 Kissena Blvd.
Queens, NY 11367-1597

OR call 718-997-3920

OR visit our website by [clicking here](#).

Student Honors and Awards

Despite the pandemic, our department has continued to move forward, and our students have continued to excel. In Spring 2020, we held a virtual Honors and Awards Ceremony in which we celebrated our latest crop of anthropology majors earning Honors and High Honors as well as our departmental named awards for juniors and seniors, and we just did the same for our Spring 2021 crop of outstanding students. Our junior awards now consist of three named awards, the **Frank Spencer Memorial Award**, given to the most promising junior concentrating in biological anthropology and two new awards in honor of the former colleagues we lost in 2020: the **Warren DeBoer Memorial Award** for the most promising junior concentrating in archaeology and the **Edgar Gregersen Memorial Award** for the most promising junior concentrating in linguistic or cultural anthropology. Our senior awards continue to include the **Lynn Ceci Memorial Award** for an outstanding graduating senior concentrating in archaeology, the **Paul Mahler Memorial Award** for an outstanding graduating senior concentrating in biological anthropology, and the **Hortense Powdermaker Award** for an outstanding graduating senior concentrating in cultural or linguistic anthropology.

Awardees 2020

Frank Spencer Memorial Award:

Najhi Diaz and Gabriela Dragan

Warren DeBoer Memorial Award:

Carolyn Mikowski

Edgar Gregersen Memorial Award:

Anna Lelonek

Lynn Ceci Memorial Award:

Miriam Fried and Kelly McLafferty

Paul Mahler Memorial Award:

Lauren Kehoe and Wade Li

Hortense Powdermaker Award:

Daniel Muras

Awardees 2021

Frank Spencer Memorial Award:

Zacharia Farrell

Warren DeBoer Memorial Award:

Rachel Tauber

Edgar Gregersen Memorial Award:

Sajah Archer

Lynn Ceci Memorial Award:

Anna Lelonek and Carolyn Mikowski

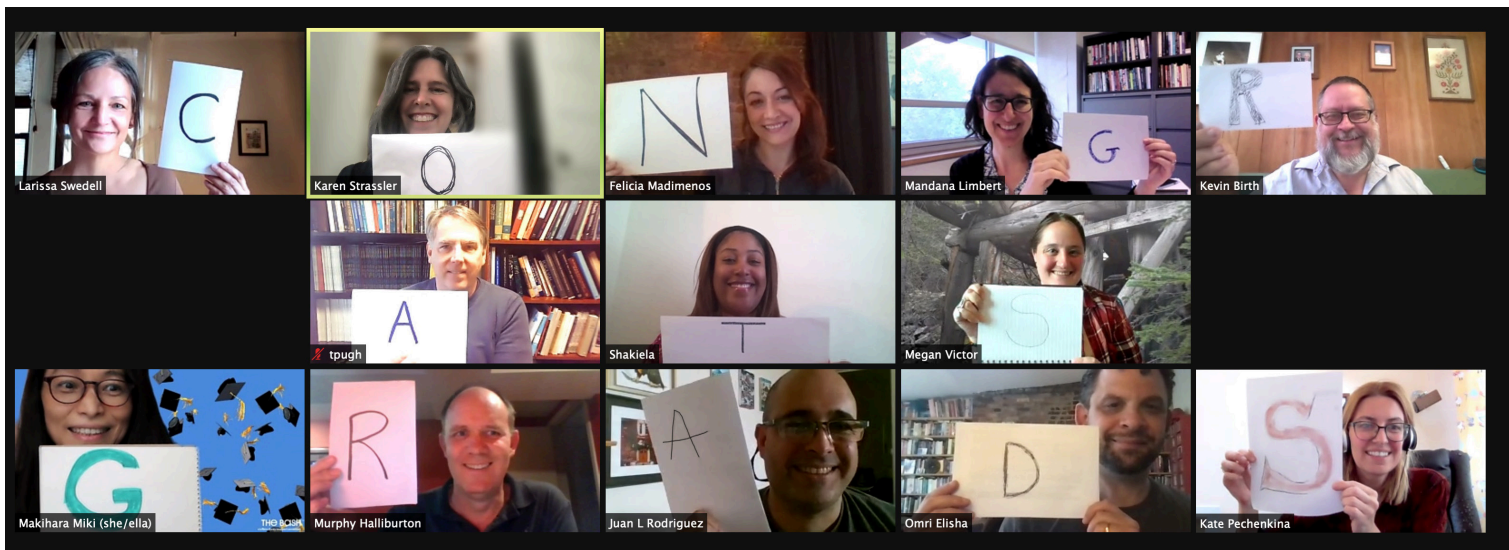
Paul Mahler Memorial Award:

Daniel Yakubov

Hortense Powdermaker Award:

Bridget McCann

Congratulations to all!



In Memoriam

Professor **Warren DeBoer** (1945–2020) joined the Department of Anthropology at Queens College in 1972 and retired in 2012. Dr. DeBoer taught Introduction to Archaeology, Peoples of North America, and Archaeology of North America—foundational courses for our anthropology majors—for forty years. He was a prolific Renaissance archaeologist whose many accomplishments were not confined to a particular area, time, or topic. He is best known for his ethnoarchaeological and ethnohistorical work in South America, where he studied modern behaviors of indigenous peoples to help to understand patterns observed by archaeologists. This work involved a range of topics such as cultural ecology, ceramic decoration and use-life, manioc consumption, feasting, ceremonial areas, and raiding. Professor DeBoer also conducted archaeological research on ancient populations in North America, examining topics such as storage pits and the economic surplus, exchange networks and sacred journeys, and gambling. He died from esophageal cancer on May 24, 2020. We have commemorated his legacy by offering an annual award to promising undergraduates at Queens College who may one day follow in his footsteps: the **Warren DeBoer Memorial Award**. If you would like to make a donation to this fund in honor of Dr. DeBoer, follow [this link](#). We extend our condolences to Dr. DeBoer's widow, Dr. Sara Stinson, also a former faculty member in our department, and we thank her for making this award possible.

Professor **Edgar Gregersen** (1937–2020) received his bachelor's degree from Queens College in 1957 and his PhD from Yale in 1962, then came back to Queens College as Anthropology faculty in 1967. He regularly taught courses in Linguistic Anthropology, Human Sexuality, and Ancient Egypt, and is best known for his research on human sexuality and African languages. His book *The World of Human Sexuality: Behaviors, Customs, and Beliefs* (1994) is a classic text on human sexual practices around the world, and his Human Sexuality course was one of the most popular at Queens College. Professor Gregersen retired from Queens College in 2003 and died from cardiac arrest on March 29, 2020 after a long illness. In his honor, we will be offering an annual

award to the most promising junior interested in linguistic or cultural anthropology: the **Edgar Gregersen Memorial Award**. The funds for this award will derive from our Anthropology Department Fund. If you would like to donate to this fund and support future recipients of this award, please follow [this link](#).

Faculty Comings and Goings



Dr. Megan Rhodes Victor

We extend a warm welcome to Dr. **Megan Rhodes Victor**, who joined us in Fall 2020. Dr. Victor received her PhD from the College of William & Mary and most recently was a post-doctoral scholar at Stanford University. She is a historical archaeologist whose research focuses on colonialism, immigration, commensal politics, and gendered practices among historically marginalized groups. Most recently, she has been studying the archaeology of taverns, saloons, and social negotiation in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial North America, including a project on “Molly Houses.” Molly Houses operated in secrecy in back rooms or upper floors of taverns, and provided an opportunity for gay, transgender, and cross-dressing individuals in eighteenth-century England and the English colonial world to meet with one another in a time when such actions were capital offenses. This project is the first to examine these spaces of the LGBTQ+ community archaeologically. In addition to her research and curricular contributions, Dr. Victor brings with her an extensive archaeological collection for student projects. She also brings expertise in “archaeogaming,” which lies at the intersection of archaeology and video games and involves virtual-reality simulations of archaeological fieldwork!



Professor Jim Moore

Professor **Jim Moore** retired at the end of January 2021, after over forty years of research, teaching, and service to the Queens College community. A historical archaeologist who worked

in Sweden, Ireland, Queens, and Long Island, Professor Moore's work on the historic Bowne House in Flushing, much of it in collaboration with Queens College undergraduates, substantially revised the history of the initial settlement of Queens and New York and continues to enrich our understanding of the history of the African population in the borough. Professor Moore served as Department Chair for many years and also chaired the Human Subjects Internal Review Board, laying the foundation for our current robust process of review. He served for five years as archaeology subfield coordinator for the Anthropology doctoral program at the Graduate Center and in various other service roles for the discipline of archaeological anthropology. Among Professor Moore's most important service was his work at a community level—as a founder of the Queens College School for Math, Science, and Technology (PS 499) and the Queens School of Inquiry (Q252). We are sorry to see Professor Moore leave us and we wish him all the best in his retirement!

Faculty News



Professor Tim Pugh

Professor **Tim Pugh** received a grant from the National Science Foundation in fall 2020 for his project entitled “State Emergence and Hyperprimacy at Nixtun-Ch'ich', Petén, Guatemala.” For this project, Dr. Pugh and a team of scholars will investigate dynamics in the development of cities and states in the polity surrounding Nixtun-Ch'ich' in Petén, Guatemala. Understanding the rise of states requires that we characterize their variations, not just study those that fit rigid stereotypes. This work will specifically address a possible case of hyperprimacy in the Middle Preclassic period (800–300 BC) Maya polity of Nixtun-Ch'ich'. Hyperprimacy occurs when the capital is massively larger than secondary and tertiary central settlements. Such capitals generally overdominate social, religious, and economic relationships within the polity. This research will involve a LiDAR survey and intensive excavations.

Continues on next page.

Professor **Omri Elisha** received a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation in fall 2020 for his project entitled “Enchanting Expertise: Knowledge, New Media, and Professionalism in Western Astrology.” Dr. Elisha’s project explores how working astrologers in the United States incorporate secular and occult knowledge practices, ethics of professionalism, and new media strategies in their efforts to promote astrological expertise as a source of insight and cultural capital. Probing beyond tabloid horoscopes and Internet memes, this ethnographic project asks: How do modern astrologers project authority and cultivate public trust? What are the procedures for authenticating expertise when it comes to astrological skills, and how are they differentiated from cultural domains such as science, cosmology, psychology, and religion? What forms of ethical and historical consciousness are made possible (or impeded) by the metaphysical principles that underlie horoscopic forecasts?

Double congratulations to Professor **Juan Luis Rodriguez Aponte** on the release of his new book, *Language and Revolutionary Magic in the Orinoco Delta* (Bloomsbury Press), which examines linguistic practices and national politics in rural Venezuela—and on achieving tenure and promotion to Associate Professor!

As our local expert on Rapa Nui—also known as Easter Island—Professor **Miki Makihara** was tapped by *CBS Sunday Morning* to lend her expertise to a piece about the first music school on the island. It aired April 18, 2021. Watch the clip [here](#).

Jemima Georges, CUNY doctoral student and QC Anthropology adjunct instructor, received a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation to support her PhD research in collaboration with her advisor, Professor Tim Pugh. Her project on “Food and Social Complexity” will investigate the social

inequality of subsistence during early urbanization in the Maya world.

Katarina Evans, CUNY doctoral student and QC Anthropology adjunct instructor, received a research grant from the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation for her PhD research on “Evolution of the Coercive Pair Bond in Hamadryas Baboons” in collaboration with her advisor, Professor Larissa Swedell.

Alumni News

Miriam Fried, QC Class of 2020, was awarded the Joan Thornton McManus Memorial Prize for Academic Excellence, an award given annually to the Queens College graduate with the highest grade-point average. Miriam received the Lynn Ceci Award from the Department of Anthropology last year as well as two prestigious QC awards, including the Raymond Taylor QC Scholars Endowment and the Brownstein-McDermott Scholarship in Humanities. She is currently finishing up her first year of the doctoral program at the CUNY Graduate Center. Congratulations, Miriam!

Markos Papadatos, QC Class of 2007, is the most recent recipient of the prestigious Journalist of the Year award from the *Hellenic News of America*, and has been inducted into the Hellenic News Hall of Fame. In early 2021, Markos won four “Best of Long Island” categories, including Best Author, Best Poet, Best Blogger, and Best Long Island Personality. Markos attributes much of his success to his education at Queens College!

Stay in Touch!

Please keep in touch with us and let us know what you’ve been up to. We have a new email address for alumni updates: QCAnthroAlumni@gmail.com

Please also feel free to email us directly using the contact information on our website at [this link](#).

If you would like to support the department, please visit our donation page, and follow [this link](#).



Department of Anthropology
Powdermaker Hall, Room 314
65-30 Kissena Blvd., Queens, NY 11367-1597
718-997-5510 • www.qc.cuny.edu/Anthropology

