Penny Pun and Jaime Bartolett Named the 2017 Valedictorians

By Merideth Matos ’17

Starting at three o’clock in the afternoon on Friday, May 19, the 2017 senior class of Marymount Manhattan College will be experiencing their last social gathering where they are all still fellow classmates. By the time they walk out the doors of David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, they will no longer be known as students at this establishment, but as alumni. As many know, graduating college is a life-changing experience. The changes they will undergo in the following months, and even the following year, will either bring them exactly what they wanted, or something they never imagined. With an occasion of such importance, it is clear that whatever goes on in this event must be done with a lot of thought and meaning. This is met by not just walking across the stage to receive the diploma, but also by the speeches that are made that day. This year’s speeches are going to be made by several individuals: The Honorary Degree recipient Stanley Nelson, an American director and producer of documentaries that delve into the history and the everyday experiences of being African-American; the Student Class speaker, Anika Ferdoash, a double-major in Finance and International Business and a double-minor in Economics and Accounting; the two valedictorians this year, Hiu Ching (Penny) Pun, a double-major in English and World Literatures and Theatre Arts with a concentration in Writing for the Stage; and Jaime Bartolett, a Theatre Arts major with a concentration in Acting and a minor in Business. This is the first time in MMC history where there have been two valedictorians in a graduating class. What made it so difficult to only choose one is that they both have a GPA of about 3.96 and have consistently had two extracurricular activities. While this may seem odd, what is even more eye-opening is knowing that these two students have the exact same GPA and same amount of extracurricular activities, yet they are two totally different people.

Pun, originally from Hong Kong, is busy with her studies on campus, her position as the News Editor on The Monitor, and interning at the Theatre Communications Group. Pun mentioned that she enjoyed being a double major but mentioned, that being an English and World Literatures major at MMC, a school that is known for its Theater department, was her most rewarding experience during her four years. “Being an English and World Literatures major… you won’t...
Letter From the Editor

Students, Faculty, & Staff

As our valued reader you know this is our very last issue of the year and as the 2016-2017 staff. We have learned a lot from one another, put in countless hours, and shared important information as effectively as possible with our audience.

As a student and staff collective, I believe The Monitor has been a voice by students and for students to reach all areas of the MMC community.

Thank you for trusting The Monitor as a informational source and allowing students to amplify their voices. If you are a graduating senior, like many of our staff, best of luck to you all and keep in touch with MMC news on our website mmcthemonitor.com.

If you are a continuing student of any major, keep reading and better yet, contribute!

Heather Harbach
Editor-in-Chief
Heather Harbach '17
Editor-in-Chief

To The Monitor Readers,

It has been an honor serving The Monitor and student body as Editor-in-Chief for the 2016-2017 year. I had the pleasure of working with a motivated staff that went above and beyond what they were asked to do. Freshman joined at the beginning of their time at MMC and blossomed into staff writers due to their impeccable writing abilities. I also had the pleasure of working with friends from other organizations and my partner, Cody J. Gambino. Cody has been the Print Managing Editor and Secretary for the past year as well as my right hand man. Cody’s initiative to step in lead and take action without request or hesitation is always a redeeming quality in a student leader. Cody has gone above and beyond his assigned duties and contributed to The Monitor’s success this school year.

Many students that do not come into the Student Organization Suite do not see the behind the scenes work of core council organizations at MMC. The detail, management, and organization that go into the production of the school newspaper took countless hours, but I couldn’t have asked for a better learning experience during my MMC career. Being a leader and student on campus is not an easy task due to the time management that needs to be enforced. I have learned to be patient and listen to those who needed to speak their mind, but also to interject my own voice when needed. Despite the various road blocks that were endured due to institutional interference, The Monitor has welcomed all student voices on campus to write about any issues they have faced. The Monitor is a student led newspaper written by students to have their voices heard in all areas at MMC. As Editor-in-Chief, I believe that The Monitor has been an outlet for students to raise their voices and raise awareness about certain issues. Throughout my entire experience, the most rewarding lesson I have learned is to never give up no matter how many times you feel discouraged because pushing through times of difficulty is what creates strength within a person.

It was so rewarding for not only myself and Cody, but the staff as well to receive Outstanding Organization of the Year at the 14th Annual Leadership Awards. Receiving the award on behalf of the staff was reassurance that this year has been an exceptional time for The Monitor. I know with certainty that The Monitor will continue to soar to new heights next year as Courtney Blackman moves into the Editor-in-Chief position. Followed by her executive staff of Camille Bourne as Print Managing Editor and Juliette Deutsch as the Digital Managing Editor. They will be in charge of the production of the newspaper and any decisions regarding the integrity of The Monitor. Thank you to everyone who has supported The Monitor and the 2016-2017.

If any current or future students would like to be involved in this phenomenal organization I highly encourage you. The rewards of being a part of The Monitor staff are gratifying and invaluable. Thank you to all for allowing me to serve as the Editor-in-Chief of The Monitor for the 2016-2017 year.
Senior & Leadership Awards Celebrate Student Achievements

By Camille Bourne ’19
Staff Writer

Early Sunday morning, both graduating and continuing students, along with friends and family, met in the Commons on the third floor of Carson Hall to celebrate their achievements over the course of the academic year that is rapidly drawing to a close. Photographers circled the tables filled with abundant displays of fruits, pastries, and other breakfast treats (some items were even more luxurious- avocado toast or chicken and waffles, anyone?), as everyone waited for the 14th Annual Marymount Manhattan College Leadership Awards to commence.

Eventually, the upbeat music that had been accompanying the morning subsided, and Dr. Carol Jackson, the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Dean of Students, took to the podium for welcoming remarks. The people in the room, she noted, embodied the spirit of what it means to get the most out of one’s college experience, and both the winners and the nominees are the driving forces that bring “excitement and life to the College.” As the event got underway, it was easy to see the many ways in which the group of students recognized that morning truly did represent the best of what MMC has to offer.

While the Leadership Awards program was brief, the community that is the backbone of MMC was on full display as each and every award was announced and presented. Even the nominees and winners who could not attend the festivities were met with applause and cheers when their names were called, often from those who were even up against them in the same category. The Monitor took home the award for Outstanding Student Organization, while the Muslim Student Organization received the award for its role as an Outstanding New Organization. All of the nominees were exemplar demonstrations of the initiative that makes Marymount Manhattan College thrive, and the recognition of both the individuals as well as the groups there reflected the spirit which makes so many of the student organizations on campus such a beneficial addition to the community.

After the Leadership Awards, full of coffee and breakfast food and with shiny disco ball-like trophies in tow, the seniors who attended the program then proceeded down to the Theresa Lang Theatre, where the Senior Awards Ceremony would soon begin. The ceremony was conducted in a newly developed style in comparison to years past, since the 2017 awards were the first of their kind to get their own distinct event- based on the sheer amount of awards given out in an hour and a half period, it is easy to see why they needed an occasion all their own. After welcome and greetings from Vice President Carol Jackson and President Kerry Walk, the prestigious Gold Keys, signifying exemplary student accomplishments in each major, along with the honorable mentions were awarded. Following were the presentations of certificates for academic achievement in each of the minors, the College Honors Program recognition, the Higher Education Opportunity Program Award, and the Silver M’s, which were given out to those who exhibited leadership and service to MMC during their time at the College.

There were also staff and faculty awards given out for each of the five academic divisions, for which seniors nominated the recipients. Many of the faculty honored had taught members of the graduating class multiple times in their collegiate careers, and the gratitude the seniors expressed was visible from the audience as each Senior Marshall called the name of a respected staff member or professor.

After the awards for both the graduating class and the senior-nominated faculty and staff awards were presented, the Senior Marshalls announced that they had made the decision to buy new furniture for the Nugent Lounge area as their senior class gift. An area where many from the MMC community meet to work, study, or simply catch up before class, while grabbing a quick snack and/or drink from Starbucks; nonetheless, the Class of 2017 chose to make a contribution to the space because they felt it will both liven up the area that sees so much traffic on a day-to-day basis, as well as curate a more comfortable environment, encouraging even more students to spend time there. With new couches and comfortable seating reportedly on the way, the class gift will surely become a new staple of MMC student life quickly upon arrival.

In her greeting remarks at the Senior Awards Ceremony, President Kerry Walk quoted an Ovid truism that is often translated to: “I attempt an arduous task; but there is no worth in that which is not a difficult achievement.” With graduation day moving ever closer for this year’s senior class, having a day to relax and celebrate their many achievements, as well as those of their fellow classmates who won’t be leaving the college realm just yet, was a chance to forget the stress of work and final exams and just enjoy for one more moment the Marymount Manhattan College community’s support for each of them on their journey; with over 25 recipients of the Silver M, leadership and service distinction among the soon-to-be graduates, it is easy to see how this graduating class has inspired the college at large, and will continue to do so in the future. Below is a list of winners and recipients from the SDA Leadership Awards, as well as the recipients of the Awards of Distinction, and the Senior-Nominated Faculty and Staff Awards which were presented at the Senior Awards Ceremony.

| Leadership Awards: |
| Advisor of the Year – Nava Silton, Ph.D. |
| Overall Student Leader of the Year: Cody J. Gambino |
| Organization of the Year – The Monitor |
| Awards of Distinction |
| Alumni Medal – Cody J. Gambino |
| Rowley Founders Medal – Ayiisha Ferrell |
| Raymunde McKay Award – Presley Scott |
| MMC Crest - Sophia Gutchinov |
| Trustees’ Award – Lisa Mills |
| Outstanding Staff Member (Senior-Nominated): Mary Brown |
| Outstanding Faculty Awards (Senior-Nominated): |
| Division of Business – Andrea Tsentides, M.B.A. |
| Division of Communication and Media Arts – Erin Greenwell, M.F.A. |
| Division of Fine and Performing Arts – Mary Fleischer, Ph. D. |
| Division of Humanities and Social Sciences – Cecilia Feilla, Ph. D. |
| Division of Sciences – Ann Aguanno, Ph.D. |
Honorary Degree Recipient Stanly Nelson

By Clare Hubble '20

Every year, Marymount Manhattan College gives an honorary degree to recognize one or more individuals for their extraordinary achievements. This year, at the 2017 Commencement Ceremony, Emmy Award-winner and documentary filmmaker Stanley Nelson Jr. will be added to the long list of remarkable people who have also been recognized by the College.

Nelson has lived in New York City his whole life. He was born and raised in Harlem and attended a private Manhattan school from kindergarten through high school. He graduated from the Leonard Davis Film School of the City College of New York in 1976, and since then he has directed and produced an astonishing twenty-one documentaries surrounding the history and experiences of African-Americans.

His latest project, The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution, explores the uprisings of the Black Panther Party, which was originally founded in 1966. The documentary features archival footage and interviews from surviving party members and FBI agents who were working at the time of the party’s rise. The film took seven long years to complete and Nelson himself interviewed a total of 51 people.

Nelson expressed his fear of no one wanting to be interviewed to Filmmaker Magazine in 2015. He said, “At some point I decided this was a film that needed to be made and in order to do so, I had to confront my fear and be candid about my passion and confidence in the film.” His confidence inspired those in the film to talk about their experiences.

The documentary premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival and then received a limited North American theatrical release that began September 2, 2015. The film received ample critical acclaim and scored a solid 92 percent on Rotten Tomatoes (which is a feat in and of itself).

The coolest thing about the documentary, though, is not the response it received, but the subjects it examines. When asked to describe a Black Panther documentary, freshman Evan Vincent shared, “I think it would be sad. It’s sad that there had to be a group like that in the first place. It’s sad that the problems are still happening today.”

The issue of police brutality was seminal to the Black Panther Party and is one of the film’s greatest influences. The release of the documentary in 2015, right before the Black Lives Matter movement protested over the death of Freddie Grey in Baltimore, could not have been more appropriate.

Nelson’s outstanding work toward discussing and solving the issue of racial inequality in America has won him countless awards (two for The Black Panthers: the Vanguard of the Revolution) and a spot on Marymount Manhattan College’s Honorary Degree Recipients list. Interestingly enough, Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks, two incredible icons for their work in the Civil Rights Movement, have also received honorary degrees from the College.

Marymount Manhattan College is dedicated to developing a conversation revolving around social, political, and cultural problems. The College uses conversation to inspire students to participate in and improve the society we live in. Nelson’s films are directly related to this mission and reflect the College’s upheld ideals. Freshman Lucy Thomas believes, “Giving [Nelson] this award is exactly what Marymount needs to do. We need to show where we stand as a school and awarding him for his films that deal with this huge problem America has is a great step towards that.”

Photos from Brooklyn College
2017 Communication Arts Creative Media Showcase

The 2017 MMC Creative Media Showcase will be held on Tuesday, May 16, beginning at 5:30 pm in the Theresa Lang Theatre, with an additional presentation and Q&A starting at 8:30 pm on the Lowerre Family Terrace. This year, there are a total of twenty student projects, including a mix of documentaries, narratives, and one installation. Content topics range from anxiety and motherhood to the relationship between social media and millennial narcissism. Led by professors Sarah Nelson-Wright and Erin Greenwell (who took over for Dan Hunt this semester as he is on leave), these twenty students have worked tirelessly for two semesters, creating their projects and seeing them to fruition.

This past fall semester, the students took Capstone 1: Research and Development. Students workedshopped and crafted ideas for their projects, creating scripts, learning how to write proposals for funding, and executing extensive research on information related to the projects. For the spring semester, they took Capstone 2: Production and Distribution, arguably the more stressful and intimidating of the two. This is when any last script writing is done and the films are shot after organizing crews, schedules, and finishing up any leftover pre-production aspects. Students also learn about finding the target audience and selling their film once it is out of post-production.

For the past ten months, twenty students researched, wrote, directed, produced, and edited most of their own projects, often taking shelter in one of the multiple editing rooms on the fifth floor of Nugent until security gave them the boot when the school closed around midnight.

“I live at school with a group of people who stayed editing until 1 am every day. Our projects are lit,” said India McKinney, the director of the experimental narrative Through Her Eyes, that looks at a day in the life of a woman who suffers from depression and the anxiety that stems from it. Vera Kudryavtseva, whose documentary A Twenty Year Chase profiles a woman’s journey to achieve her dream of opening a cheetah conservation in Africa, cheekily adds, “I’m still looking for a place to hide from security!”

Nichole Ligos, who created the sole untitled installation of the showcase, references the grueling aspects of the work and the long editing process. “I have to go home and stretch out my pointer finger.”

Personally, creating my Capstone film has been one of the most stressful and rewarding experiences of my life. I’ve laughed with my crew at the ridiculous lengths we go to create the perfect shot and I’ve cried in the stairwell when I just couldn’t get my story to work. But one of the best parts of Capstone is having a wonderful support system behind you, ready to help film or watch a cut and help you reach the finish line. Fellow students and professors work day in and day out to make sure everyone’s vision is achieved, and we’re all very excited to see our hard work pay off.

The full list of students participating in the showcase this year are: Lauren Brumfield, Kathryn Barnish, Megan Douglas-Betancourt, Jalen Eugene, Alessandra Figueroa-Herrera, Janae Hack, Vera Kudryavtseva, Andy Liu, Carlos Martinez, India McKinney, Kathleen Miles, Summer Moran, Kevin Notholt, Jesse Pedersen, Alicia Pitts, Christina Remley, Autumn Swope, Rena Vega, Bryan Veloz, and Sydney Williams.

The MMC Creative Media Showcase 2017 will begin at 5:30 pm in the Theresa Lang Theatre, move to the Lowerre Family Terrace around 8:30 pm for Ligo’s installation, and end officially around 11:00 pm. More information and a teaser trailer can be found on MMC’s website as well as the MMC Communication & Media Arts / C4P Facebook page.
After graduating early from Marymount Manhattan College and getting some support as a Jeannette K. Watson Fellow, I got on a plane for Delhi, India for a three month internship at Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust (HLFPPT). HLFPPT is one of the oldest social marketers in India and provides some really innovative yet practical solutions to gaps in family planning and reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent (RMNCH+A) health. Here, I have been making films about different programs like the Mobile Medical Units, which are trucks or boats equipped with medical staff and medicines to serve people living in remote areas in Rajasthan or people living in slums in the most populated state, Uttar Pradesh, which is where I have been based. HLFPPT operates more than 130 vans in other states across India. I have also been HLFPPT’s go-to copy editor and designer for many reports and new marketing ventures, so it feels pretty great being useful AND doing work that makes a difference that I can so clearly see.

Let me now add that this is actually my first time out of the country, except for my few trips to Niagara Falls before you needed a passport. So as I anticipated, I have been met with some major insight and lessons. Among the plethora of trivial and substantial ones, I’d like to share a few.

1.) You learn more by listening. I knew this already but practice it daily because I had never heard Hindi other than the occasional subway conversation between strangers. Many of us practice “listening” when we cannot help but witness everyone else’s lives fly by in New York, but there is such virtue in treating your surroundings as learning lessons. Now I can generally understand conversations in Hindi and keep my eyes open wider. After all, communication is over 90 percent non-verbal. (Thank you MMC Communications Degree!)

2.) Our job flexibility is unique. Because of the caste system here in India, people cannot float below or above their prescribed work channel. For instance, when I mentioned being a nanny for two Upper East Side families in college, my coworker was very surprised. From my conversations with coworkers, it is not acceptable to take a service job in India if you are of a certain class/education level/income background. Obviously this poses some major class tension, but Americans have the opportunity to spend some time in another’s shoes, or “jootis” as they might say in Hindi. Savor the days as a nanny who is called a “fat rodent” or is told to “go do some laundry” by five and eight-year-olds. Unfortunately, I can speak from experience. The patience and learned lessons as eager coffee baristas and American Apparel staff will serve us for years to come.

3.) Traveling makes it harder to be ignorant. For instance, in the US, we often complain and even make fun of Indian call centers. Perhaps it is a way of dealing with our frustration of being on the line for so long? But the thing is, over here, that job is a good one. Perhaps at home, it’s not as respected as a profession, but it surpasses the safety and consistency and value of wage laborers/migrant workers, sex workers, or people in service jobs. Those people should be commended for hard work too, but remember that having an office job here requires education. In fact, based on the current listings, you must have the equivalent of a high school diploma, need two languages, and some work experience. Consider what a feat this is if many children are forced to cut education short to work or get married. And if you are lucky enough for higher education, you have three undergrad years, two in post graduation diploma (Master’s), then placed in a job! The point is that we shouldn’t be so quick to judge people based on the educational privileges we have been afforded, nor should we accept the education system as is if it isn’t working for us.

I cannot say how many more lessons that I have learned and will continue to while taking the remainder of my time here to see Kashmir, Kerala, Goa, and Nepal. Traveling, let alone living in a foreign country for an extended period is one of the most valuable experiences you can give yourself. I’m heading to Cape Town, South Africa for my final summer internship as Jeannette K. Watson Fellow and could not be more excited to continue this rich adventure. I’ll be making a pit stop in New York, so see you at graduation!
MMC Tamponathon Contributes Menstrual Products to RACKET

By Courtney Blackman ’18
Copy Editor

The average female-bodied person who menstruates (I’m making a point not to say “woman” because men can menstruate too) will use 11,000 pads/tampons/liners/etc. in their lifetime. Just take a moment to consider how much this costs. A Huffington Post article calculates over $15,000 as the lifetime cost for having a period. Of course this figure takes into account the hygiene products necessary to a menstruating person, but tampons and pads are cheap, especially in New York City.

Now take a moment to think about the vast amount of homeless people in Manhattan. Many, many people every day must choose between eating and buying the menstruation products that are needed immediately. What would you choose? Many homeless people have access to shelters and women’s homes that provide meals, clothes, and shelter, but this leaves out the seriously needed menstrual products. These necessities are seldom remembered; so few people donate them to those who are less fortunate.

Due to having such limited resources and therefore not being able to afford or access these period products, homeless and underprivileged menstruating people are forced to use products far longer than is considered healthy or may even use socks just to prevent bleeds all over themselves.

Due to these unfortunate circumstances and the fact that a period cannot be controlled, I decided to use my resources as Campus Activities Board (CAB) President to do a menstrual product drive, teaming up with RACKET, an organization run by two women, Margo Seiber and Caroline Angell, who work to take the shame out of having a period. They work to end the taboo that surrounds menstruation while doing amazing work distributing menstrual hygiene products to people who have limited access.

Working right here in our amazing city, CAB hosted a drive to collect all sorts of period products to be given to RACKET, for them to distribute to those in need. For two weeks, CAB hosted the drive for students to donate products or money to purchase products. The drive was coined “Tamponathon,” a marathon drive to get as many products as possible.

At the conclusion of Tamponathon, students made care packages to be given out by RACKET.

I’m proud to say that, in total, the Tamponathon collected over 800 products. With these, CAB was able to create 40 individual care packages of 20 products each. It’s amazing that Marymount Manhattan College, a small institution, can take responsibility for helping 40 people stay healthy during their periods. While I won’t be acting as president of CAB next year, I have every intention of hosting the event again, either collaborating with CAB or through another student organization. It’s important to help those in need, and especially important to do it while we have a president in office who is detrimental to women’s health and reproductive rights.

If you are interested in helping RACKET, and becoming a part of their team, please check out their website at weracket.com. I hope to see you at one of their events soon.

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The Handmaid’s Tale: Terrifyingly Important Television

By Jessica Fillare ’18
Features Editor

Warning: Minor spoilers ahead.

If you don’t have a Hulu subscription, now is the time to shell out the $7.99 per month.

I sincerely wish that everyone on this planet right now would commit to watching Hulu’s spectacular, chilling, and horrifying new series, The Handmaid’s Tale. Based on the 1985 Margaret Atwood novel, it is a tale of our fears becoming the ordinary.

Set in the fictional Republic of Gilead, the constitution is suspended, a growing number of women are infertile due to a high level of pollution, and right-wing religious fanatics have risen to power. The new class system includes women as Wives, Daughters, Marthas (maids), Aunts (who train the handmaids), or Handmaids (who provide fertility for Commanders and their Wives). Unwomen (who question the establishment. The men are either Commanders (government officials), Angels (soldiers at war), Eyes of God (secret police force), Guardians of the Faith (soldiers, security officers), or work “normal” jobs, such as doctors or chauffeurs.

The incredibly talented Elisabeth Moss gives an Emmy-worthy performance as Offred (who had another name, June, but is forbidden now). Offred literally means “Of Fred,” and Fred is the Commander she is assigned to as a Handmaid. She was torn apart from her husband and daughter and lives a powerless life, attending to her Commander (Joseph Fiennes) and his wife, Serena Joy (Yvonne Strahovski). As a handmaid, she wears a long red dress and white bonnet because God forbid a Handmaid show any sex appeal!

Quite frankly, the story itself is a captivating nightmare that provides countless moments for you to think, “Well maybe that isn’t so far off from happening here one day.” Flashbacks show the sudden occurrences of women being stripped from their rights of property, money, education, and abortion. This world is a man’s world. In a voiceover, Offred even refers to her role as a child bearer as “a womb with two legs.”

Before each episode plays on Hulu, there is a “viewer discretion is advised” intro because of the brutal acts of violence portrayed, like seeing a character getting hung, constant portrayals of rape, and the Handmaids being physically abused at least once each episode. But is this viewer discretion also to warn us before we view more of the horrors that could possibly become the new normal one day? YES.

This series is tragically beautiful and captivating. Tragic because of disregard of women. Atwood’s extraordinary text is elevated with a tangible sense of fear and anxiety in each episode. The camera’s close-up of Moss’s makeup-less face shows the story rather than tells it. The Handmaid’s Tale is shocking and disturbing, as it should be. To date, five of the total ten episodes have been released. The fourth episode titled, “Nolite te Bastardes Carborundorum” meaning “don’t let the bastards grind you down” in Latin. It ends on a more “uplifting” note (compared to other episodes) showing Offred and other Handmaids walking together outside. Although Offred still trusts no one and won’t accept her current state as reality, this final scene shows that the women are united in suffering, but not in unity. Offred voices the last line of the episode (which has been described as “mic dropping”) and says, “Nolite te bastardes carborundorum bitches.” Offred will keep on going.

Nevertheless, she persisted.

The Handmaid’s Tale airs episodes on Hulu on a weekly basis. The show was recently reviewed for a second season. Praise be.
Resources on Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention

By Amanda Sherwin ’19
Staff Writer

Unfortunately, misconceptions surrounding sexual assault and assault victims still exist. The truth is that it can happen to anyone and has happened to more people than you might think. According to UN Women, one in three women around the world will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetimes. One in six women in the United States will experience it. Sexual assault is even more prevalent on college campuses; in a study of undergraduate women, 19 percent experienced sexual assault or attempted sexual assault during their time at college. While some might say a small urban school like MMC isn’t a “typical” college environment, awareness and prevention of sexual assault should still be a top priority. According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, “Student or not, college-age adults are at high risk for sexual violence.”

Despite such a high rate of sexual assault, only 20 percent of female victims ages 18-24 report the incident to law enforcement. People looking from the outside in sometimes assume that victims who don’t report the assault are just “making their incident up.” In reality, there are so many reasons that sexual assault survivors do not take legal action against their aggressor. They might think that their incident was a private matter, that it was not important enough, or they may fear retaliation and social alienation—especially because the majority of victims are assaulted by someone they know.

Victims may also delay reporting or fail to report their assault because the process of moving forward can be overwhelming. The creators of a new app called “Reach Out” are attempting to simplify this process. Once you download the app and select MMC as the default page, all of MMC resources for sexual assault survivors are at students’ fingertips. Available for free download on the iOS App and Google Play stores, the app organizes resources into school-specific categories like medical care, campus resources, and policies. It also covers useful topics like education and prevention, 24/7 hotlines, and New York State and New York City resources. The app aims to provide support to students at every stage of dealing with a sexual assault incident, from seeking safety and collecting evidence immediately after the assault, to taking legal action and reaching out for long-term emotional support.

Co-creator of the app, Jack Zandi, said, “We felt that survivors of sexual misconduct shouldn’t have to endlessly search and scavenge for crucial information in a time-sensitive situation. We hope that this app helps survivors, and friends or family members of survivors, to find crucial information and resources, in an easy and intuitive way that would eliminate the inconveniences and frustration of post-assault research.” Whether helping someone else or seeking help as a victim of sexual violence yourself, knowing options and how to access them can provide comfort in an otherwise horrible situation.

“I think this app makes something that’s often difficult to seek help for more accessible and less intimidating,” said sophomore Nolie Wagner. The month of April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and events held nationwide demonstrated the importance of supporting survivors of sexual assault, and educating others on their role in preventing it.

Sexual assault affects our brothers, sisters, classmates, and best friends every day of the year. As a campus community, we all have a role in play in educating ourselves and challenging other people’s misconceptions. Ultimately we must allow survivors’ voices to be heard and their options to be clear.

13 Reasons Why is a Major Step for Mental Health Awareness

By Kathleen Eccleston-Cooper ’17
Social Media Editor

Teen suicide is not a new topic. The subject matter has thrived in pop culture based media including the Tony-nominated Dear Evan Hansen and the cult-favorite film The Virgin Suicides. The majority of all popular opinions regarding the favoritism or absolute hatred toward 13 Reasons Why is centered on the hard-to-forget suicide scene. The protagonist, Hannah Baker (Kaatherine Langford), took a seat in her bathroom, filled her tub with water, and as it overflowed, slit her wrists and bled out. The graphic scene pressed Netflix to set updated trigger warnings due to spine-tingling and vivid images depicting one of the worst tragedies imaginable: suicide.

Studies continue to prove that mass media is one of the public’s primary sources of information about disorders such as Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, and Depression. Considering such facts, A Health News Report from US and World News sought out the professional opinion of Stephen Hinshaw, a professor of Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley who stated that the, “Majority of the misrepresentation concerning mental illness influences viewers that individuals who suffer with it as ‘them from the rest of us’ furthering the growth stereotypes that they are incompetent, dangerous, and slovenly undeserving.”

In short, the series begins a few weeks after Hannah’s suicide. Tony (Christian Navarro), a socially awkward classmate, helps distribute thirteen tapes labeled with the names of additional classmates who contributed to traumatic events that influenced Hannah’s decision to commit suicide. Clay (Dylan Minnette), an even more socially awkward classmate, and former crush of Hannah’s serves as the show’s avenging angel who is determined to confront others who have influenced the tragic events in hope that the truth will set them free.

Although it may not be popular opinion, I believe 13 Reasons Why is a major stride regarding positive mental health representation. Neglecting responsibility is a common theme among most of the opposing arguments to the series. One of the largest problems regarding the representation of mental health, or lack thereof, is that the association with psychological problems are diminished or glossed over. This not only strengthens stereotypes, but it makes room for stereotypes to be recreated in media.

If the goal is to meet a sociological balance that creates images of mental health as “normal” instead of perpetuating the associated ideology of “us and them” as mentioned by Professor Hinshaw, then why shouldn’t the series have been “repetitive” or imply that “one thing” can lead to suicide? The reality is, and what I think 13 Reasons Why depicts so cleverly, that things don’t have to be dramatically horrible to affect a person deep enough to give them the idea that suicide is an option. Considering that life isn’t perfect, in regards to depicting a story that has the potential to contain similarities to individuals who contemplate suicide, I would consider an imbalance of imperfection to be absolutely perfect.

Bullying is a serious problem, rape is a serious problem, and there is a void when it comes to depicting teens in a manner that represents the actualities of bullying and rape as horrible as they are. The question must then be proposed, would the production of media containing raw reflections of both decrease them from happening?
If I had a dollar for every time someone has said to me either “you should be in politics” or “you should be a lawyer,” I wouldn’t have financial trouble. I always had an inkling in my heart that both of these proposed career paths were, in fact, not for me. However, it wasn’t until I became an on-campus activist that I realized my intuition is true. Through holding a senate position on campus, I came to the conclusion that my method of activism isn’t meant for government. Along with this, the frustrating nature of having to defend issues that aren’t seen as an immediate problem solidified my notion that I am in fact not meant for a courtroom.

Power dynamics and structures are very much in place at Marymount Manhattan College. The chain of command is especially present to those who have focused on shifting campus policy for the interests of disenfranchised communities on campus. It can be a frustrating scenario to have to follow certain channels and avenues in order to have your voice heard. If a student was unsatisfied with the progress of their on-campus goal, practices were set in place to ensure that issues wouldn’t be addressed any higher up unless need be. This academic year we have seen students become creative to address their concerns outside of this power structure. For example, unsatisfied with the college’s reasoning as to why the institution won’t openly say Black Lives Matter outside of naming an event, students created posters that voiced their frustrations. This same poster would also be featured in the Black History Month issue of The Monitor. Despite MMC describing itself as an institution welcome to on-campus political activism, most posters were removed from their locations by the 11:30 AM class time slot on that day.

Along with this, students felt a sense of frustration when expressing their views of racist practices on campus. MMC prides itself on being an institution welcome to on-campus political activism, most posters were removed from their locations by the 11:30 AM class time slot on that day.

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A lot of change was created due to student pushback throughout my four years of college at MMC. In some instances, MMC is a completely different institution than the one I attended way back in 2013, and I would argue it changed for the better. Student activists are responsible for all advancements in regards to campus climate. While it could be tremendously challenging for a radical activist to exist in an institution of higher learning, it has been rewarding to see remnants of the work of my peers continue to manifest in upcoming campus initiatives. The road to equality is not an easy one, and I have learned throughout my time at MMC that it isn’t for the sensitive of heart, either. However, I learned that activism is something I am beyond passionate about and am excited to apply it to my career not only as a social worker, but as an actor as well.
...expect it, but the way the curriculum of the department is structured... the courses were the most liberating classes I've ever taken at Marymount”.

Bartolett, from Bridgewater, New Jersey, is the Treasurer for Student Theater at Marymount (S.T.A.M.) and spends a lot of time at her work-study in the theater recruitment office, a place that she actually mentions is the most rewarding experience at MMC. “Working in the recruitment office... I was on the phone with a student from Canada who was having issues deciding whether or not she wanted to go internationally for college and come to Marymount, or stay close to home and go to a school not far from her. I was able to help her sort things out...[it] showed a passion that I have for teaching,” said Bartolett.

After meeting the valedictorians and realizing how they do share similarities in GPA and have the same amount of extracurricular activities on and off campus, it’s interesting to see how two people from totally different backgrounds could be similar enough in numbers to share such an important title for the Class of 2017 and to the MMC community.

Surprisingly, becoming valedictorian was not a goal for either student. They both strived to do well in their studies, but this was not something that they thought to be on the horizon. While they were both shocked and happy about what they have achieved, their reactions weren’t exactly the same. Bartolett found it to be one of the coolest moments of her life. She felt like all her hard work had paid off, while Pun said she had already begun thinking about what to write for her speech.

What exactly does one do to achieve such a high academic standing? While both students mentioned being studious and always putting their academics to the highest of importance in life, Bartolett also mentioned, “The most important thing is balance, especially freshman year. Do things a week in advance...but cut yourself some slack when necessary. Don’t just study, study, study. Try to be a mentally and socially happy person. You need balance.”

Being the valedictorian, or valedictorians in this case, is an important figure at commencement because it shows the high academic achievement for the students involved and also reflects well on the departments that the students major in. Bartolett, who majors in Theatre Arts with a concentration in Acting, is the third consecutive valedictorian at MMC who achieved this high academic standing as a Theatre Arts major. While Pun is a double major and one of her majors is Theatre Arts with a concentration in Writing for the Stage, her other major in English and World Literatures makes her the first valedictorian in the past five years alone to have achieved this position as an English and World Literatures major, which shows highly on the Department of English and World Literatures.

The Valedictorians, Class Speaker, and the Honorary Degree recipient are all important figures for a Commencement Ceremony. The most important figure at graduation is you. Being able to graduate college, after spending years trying to achieve that goal, has finally come. You’ve done it! You’ve graduated!

The 2017 Commencement Ceremony will be held on Friday, May 19 at David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center at 3:00pm.
Meet The Monitor 2017-2018 Staff

Courtney Blackman '18
Editor-in-Chief
Court is a rising senior working towards her degree in Public Relations and Strategic Communications while minoring in Gender and Sexuality Studies. A very active student on campus, Court has served as the President of Campus Activities Board, Vice President of the GSS Club, Peer Leader, and the Copy Editor of The Monitor. Court loves spending time with friends and can often be found in the Student Organization Suite, most likely thinking about mozzarella sticks and butts.

Camille Bourne '19
Print Managing Editor
Camille Bourne is a double major in Cinema, Television, & Emerging Media / Digital Journalism, with a minor in Political Science. She specializes in political and entertainment writing; enjoys cooking, printmaking, and going to the theatre. She is unofficially sponsored by Waffle House, and is fascinated by conspiracy theories.

Amanda Sherwin '19
Copy Editor
Amanda is a junior studying Dance & Digital Journalism. When not at MMC (which is mostly never,) she loves attending concerts, dance classes, and all the brunches.

Victoria A. Villier '18
Photo Editor
Victoria A. Villier is excited to take on the position of photo editor for The Monitor. When she’s not at MMC, Victoria likes to write poetry, churning butter, and taking care of Violeta (her new African violet house plant).

Juliette Deutsch '20
Digital Managing Editor
Juliette is a Film, Television and Emerging Media major, from Los Angeles, CA. Juliette currently is an intern at Broadway Video, and hopes to be a television and comedy producer. When not working, you can find Juliette in a SoulCycle class or eating her way through the city.

Katherine Schaffstall '18
News Editor
Katherine was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. She is a double major in Communication Arts and Digital Journalism. When she is not in class, she can be found wandering the streets of New York.

Jessica Fillare '18
Features Editor
Jessie is senior Communication Arts major / Journalism minor. It’s her third year as the Features Editor and she mostly writes about theatre and entertainment. She hopes to pursue a career in theatre administration and PR. She also loves cats, The Real Housewives of NY & Beverly Hills, and Jon Hamm.

Nina Simisterra '19
Social Media Manager
Nina is a junior in the B.A Theatre Arts Program with a double concentration in Theatre Performance and Directing. She also has a minor in Arts for Communities. Nina is a Peer Leader and a member of the Theatre Arts Council. Overall she is friendly, neurotic, a Meme enthusiast, and takes regularly scheduled naps in the SOS.

Jennifer Blake ’18
Jenna Friedrich ’19
Elise Tadaro ’19
Stephen Hladik ’20
Claire Hubble ’20
Jacqueline Manno ’20
Sara Murphy ’20