



The Queensborough Community College Nursing Class of Jan. 07



Photos courtesy Arpi Pap, for Queensborough Community College

The Candlelight Ceremony as each new nurse lights the candle of the next.

## QCC holds graduation for 58 nurses

BY JILLIAN ABBOTT

[jabbott@queenscourier.com](mailto:jabbott@queenscourier.com)

In a ceremony that originated in the 1860's at the Nightingale School of Nursing at St. Thomas Hospital in London, 58 new registered nurses participated in their candlelight nursing graduation ceremony at the Queensborough Community College (QCC).

In addition to receiving a pin, the graduates, all dressed in white and each sporting a blood-red carnation, carried a candle lamp, which symbolized the care and devotion nurses administer to the sick and injured in the practice of nursing. The candles were lit in the darkened auditorium as a tribute to these traditions.

Although the ceremony which took place at the QCC Performing Arts Center Theater, 222-05 56th Avenue in Bayside, on Tuesday, January 9, was a serious event, there were moments of levity and joy, such as when Sister Alice Danaher gave the Invocation by saying that nurses were angels in comfortable shoes.

QCC has one of the largest clinical nursing programs in the Metropolitan area, and is the main educator of registered nurses in

Queens. With more than 6,000 nursing graduates since 1967, the program continues to be essential in helping alleviate the current nursing shortage.

Featured speaker, Queensborough President Dr. Eduardo J. Martí, said that while the twentieth century was the century of technology, the twenty-first century would be the century of biology and predicted that the role and importance of nurses would only increase.

"Health care in the future will be amazing and will test your ethical values," he said.

Other speakers, many of whom emphasized the humanity and need for the highest standards of ethical conduct for nurses included Maureen Wallace, chairperson of the Nursing Department, and Nursing professor Cheryl Spencer. Also in attendance were Charlene Prounis, managing partner at Flashpoint Medica, who graduated from the Queensborough Nursing Program in 1976 and who was named as an honoree at this year's Partners for Progress Gala. Cheryle Levine, Class of 1975, and President of the QCC Alumni Association also addressed to the new graduates.

## Fourth generation Meyer joins QBG board

BY JILLIAN ABBOTT

[jabbott@queenscourier.com](mailto:jabbott@queenscourier.com)

Willets S. Meyer, an attorney with Farrell Fritz, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Queens Botanical Garden (QBG). Meyer, a fourth generation board member, can now continue his family's long association with the QBG.

He is the great-grandson of the Garden's founder, Charles G. Meyer, grandson of a former Board Chair Charles G. Meyer, Jr. and son of former Board Chair, George S. Meyer.

QBG began over 60 years ago as an exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair. According to Meyer, once the fair ended the exhibition was evicted and his great grandfather, a real estate developer with the Cord Meyer Development Company, a firm he co-founded at the turn of the century and which developed Forest Hills, Forest Hills Gardens and Elmhurst, found the current site for the Garden.

There has not been a Meyer on the QBG board since his father, who had been on and off the board over a 20-year period, left four years ago. Coincidentally, the law firm of Farrell Fritz is involved with the QBG as well as several other Queens non-profits.

"Another Farrell Fritz lawyer, Lou Vlahos, had been on the board, and pushed my nomination along," said Meyer who is delighted to be able to continue his family's involvement in the Garden.

Meyer said that his goal as a board member is to strengthen the Garden and make the site more accessible and important to the public. He said that Susan Lacerte, the Executive Director of the Gardens, has transformed QBG recently, and the new Visitor/Administration Building will be, and



Willets S. Meyer

is, a model for green building.

"It's fascinating and amazing," he said. "The geothermal heating and cooling, the special glass and the electrical system somehow translate into 50-60 percent energy cost saving. In this way the Garden is playing a leadership role in the urban community."

Meyer's personal vision for the QBG is to make the Garden more relevant and important to community it serves. He

believes the Garden should be providing what people want, and drew attention to how many people are married there.

"It's wonderful," he said. "The Garden is trying to serve the community."

He was also pleased to note that the Garden has taken the ethnic diversity of Flushing into account while striving to be inclusive in terms of both plantings and

activities such as early morning exercises in the park.

"The QBG is open to suggestions and wants to keep relevant," he said.

His personal favorite part of the Garden is the many acres of cherry trees.

"This is a definite trip every spring to see the trees in bloom. It's the best showing this side of Washington DC," said Meyer, who has been coming to the Garden since he was eight-years-old and now has a five-year-old son and three-year-old daughter who he hopes will continue the family involvement.

Meyer lives on Long Island, but says his connection to Queens runs deep. He is the first lawyer and the last of his family to live in the area since his only sister moved abroad and his only brother now lives in California.

"Yes it was a bit of a scandal in the family when I was dropped off the truck and became a lawyer instead of a real estate developer," he joked.