

I AM



45 VOICES
**CELEBRATING
45 YEARS**

HOSTOS



ON THE OCCASION OF HOSTOS'
45TH ANNIVERSARY, I'M VERY PROUD
TO SAY, "I AM HOSTOS."

As we celebrate the 45th anniversary of Hostos Community College, I'm inspired by the thought that you and I are authors and actors in the unfolding story of Hostos. Our own stories, along with those of so many others, help tell the 45-year history of this proud college. We are members of the Hostos family. Our lives, dreams, struggles and accomplishments define Hostos, just as Hostos defines us. For this reason I take great pleasure in sharing with you the individual stories contained in this commemorative booklet. Here are 45 authentic voices that give meaning to the phrase, "I am Hostos." Nominated by members of the college community, these men and women embody Hostos' mission, leadership, passion and commitment to service. I urge you to read and share the stories with others.



A handwritten signature in orange ink that reads "Félix V. Matos Rodríguez". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

FÉLIX V. MATOS RODRÍGUEZ / PRESIDENT



NIEVES ANGULO / FACULTY
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, MATHEMATICS

On the first day, it was hot. I always sat in the first row. When the professor entered the room, he ignored the men and asked me: “What are you doing here?” I just looked at him. I didn’t know what to say. “I just wanted to learn differential equations,” I said at last. It took me a long time to figure out what he meant. I’ve always had to swim against the current, but life gives you patience. I graduated from Hunter with honors and did my master’s degree and began teaching at Hostos in 1991.

Our students want a better life, and they know what they need.

It’s good to see that women are approaching mathematics more openly these days. We’ve even sent students to NASA in equal numbers of men and women. There’s still an imbalance in STEM, but we are reaching more and more people. At the end of the day, I feel happy.



FACULTY

NIEVES ANGULO

I AM HOSTOS



PABLO CABRERA / FACULTY

PROFESSOR EMERITUS

I was a senior producer director at WIPR before I came to Hostos in the fall of 1972. I had been doing theater in New York and started at Hostos by invitation of Dr. Flora Mancuso, when she was president.

At that time we were very fortunate to have first-rate artists among the Hostos faculty. José Kenderich was an excellent set and costume designer. It was a time to do theater but there were no funds, so we asked friends in the profession to come and help us. I got a lot of help from professionals like Ramón Albino, Soledad Romero, Malin Falú, Ilka Tanya Payán, Virginia Rambal, Ada Verónica Muñoz, John Scheffler and Gloria Zayas.

Dr. Mancuso asked to be on the committee to design and oversee the progress of the theaters. We did a lot of work to get Hostos' two theaters done. When they were about to open, President Isaura Santiago and Dean Awilda Orta asked me to move to the theater.

I ASKED THEM IF I COULD HAVE A REPERTORY COMPANY, AND THEY SAID, "ABSOLUTELY"; AND THAT IS HOW WE ESTABLISHED THE HOSTOS REPERTORY COMPANY.



PABLO CABRERA

FACULTY | I AM HOSTOS



EUNICE FLEMISTER / FACULTY

LECTURER AND COORDINATOR,
GERONTOLOGY

I am a Bronx girl born in the old Lincoln Hospital, attended John Phillips Sousa School on Baychester Avenue and Walton High School. Played lead tenor saxophone. We learned a lot by improvisation. I am still very involved in music in church. I was working in a nursing home in Manhattan. Professor Dianne Penner had a HUD grant and hired me to teach some classes in gerontology. When I walked in to do my interview, I knew the receptionist from high school. It was like Homecoming.

My first day in class, I told the students, “I’m from the projects, Edenwald Houses.” “You survived,” they said.

I got this feeling that I can affect lives.

I was raised in a single parent home. Their stories are my story. I can tell them that even though that’s happening in your lives right now—poverty, abuse, drugs, alcohol, just pathetic—I can tell them, “You can do better. You can be better, and this is a great place to start.”



EUNICE FLEMISTER

FACULTY I AM HOSTOS

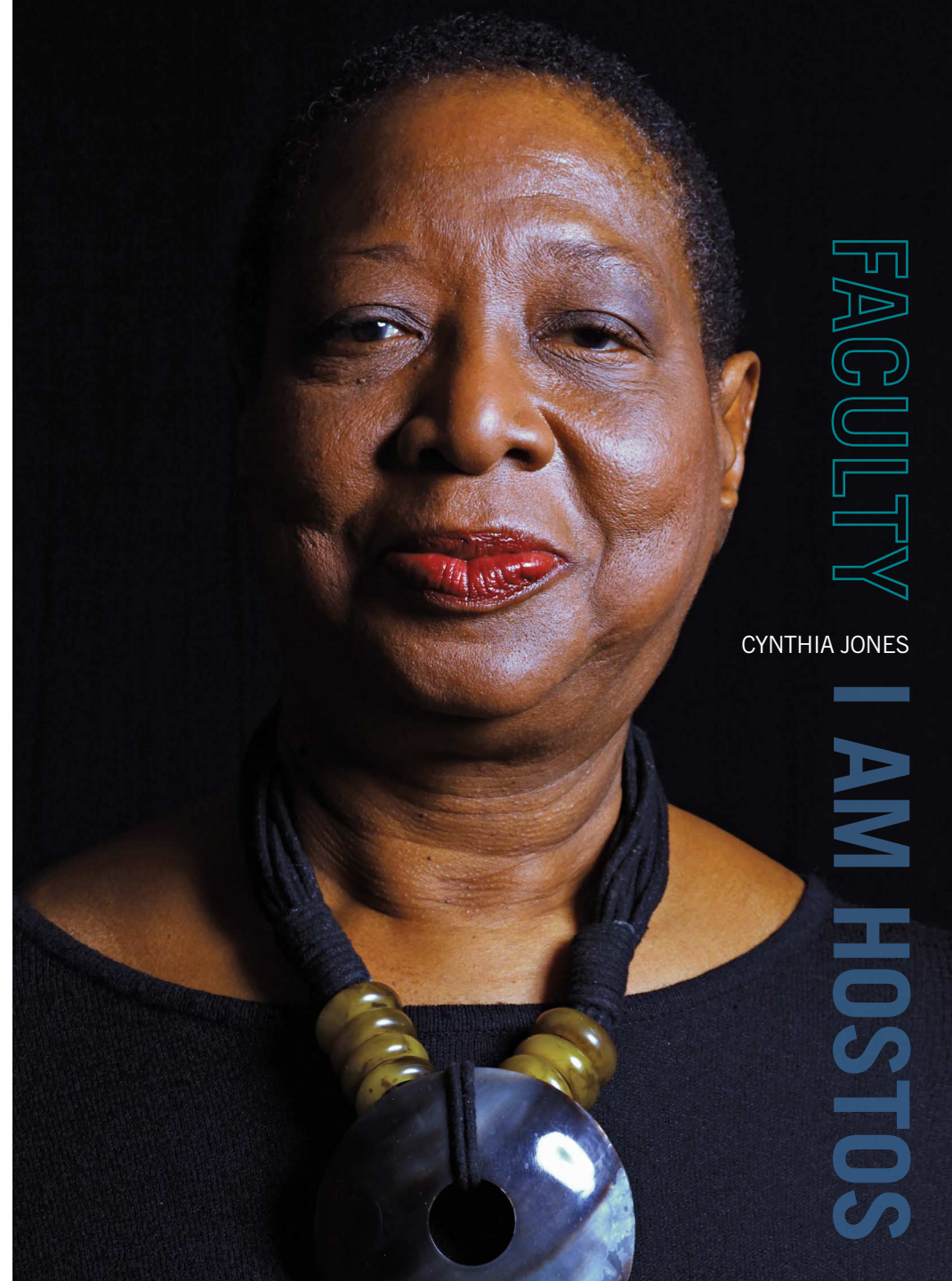


CYNTHIA JONES / FACULTY
LECTURER, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

What pops at me is the students. I am here to teach, but I find my students teach me. **WHAT SNATCHES AT ME ABOUT HOSTOS IS THE GRACE.** I love seeing students develop.

At first they're anxious and tentative, they need to be encouraged. Then they progress in ways that almost can't be measured. It's humbling.

Each day I talk to my mother in Orangeburg, South Carolina. She's 90 years old. She's one of the last living teachers of the first black schools sponsored by Sears & Roebuck, an initiative of Booker T. Washington. Her schoolhouse is now a National Monument. She came to New York, second in her class, from a black college, but was turned away. She worked in a factory, then social services. Hostos snatches at me like my mother, filled by grace.



CYNTHIA JONES

FACULTY I AM HOSTOS



LEWIS LEVINE / FACULTY

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND
INTENSIVE ESL PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Born in the Bronx, dad, mom, mom's mom, me, my brother. When I was little, there were all of us in a one-bedroom apartment. My parents had the typical American story, met and married after the war. Finally we moved to Teaneck, New Jersey, a world away from the Bronx.

After my mom died—I was thirteen—I ended up in a Quaker boarding school in Bucks County, where I repeated the same French courses over and over. Then I spent some confused years at Harvard. Left. I didn't know it at the time but it led to my calling, to here.

I came to New York, worked at the A Street Bookstore. I saved my money, wanting to travel, and discovered my interest in languages. I traveled around Europe and from Istanbul to India, back to Harvard to study French and Spanish, did some more traveling. Language was it for me. I trained at Teachers College with Cynthia Jones.

A classmate called in the spring of 1977 about Hostos, and I've been here ever since.



FACULTY

LEWIS LEVINE

I AM HOSTOS



HÉCTOR LÓPEZ / FACULTY

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR & COORDINATOR,
BUSINESS AND ACCOUNTING;
CHAIRPERSON, COLLEGE SENATE

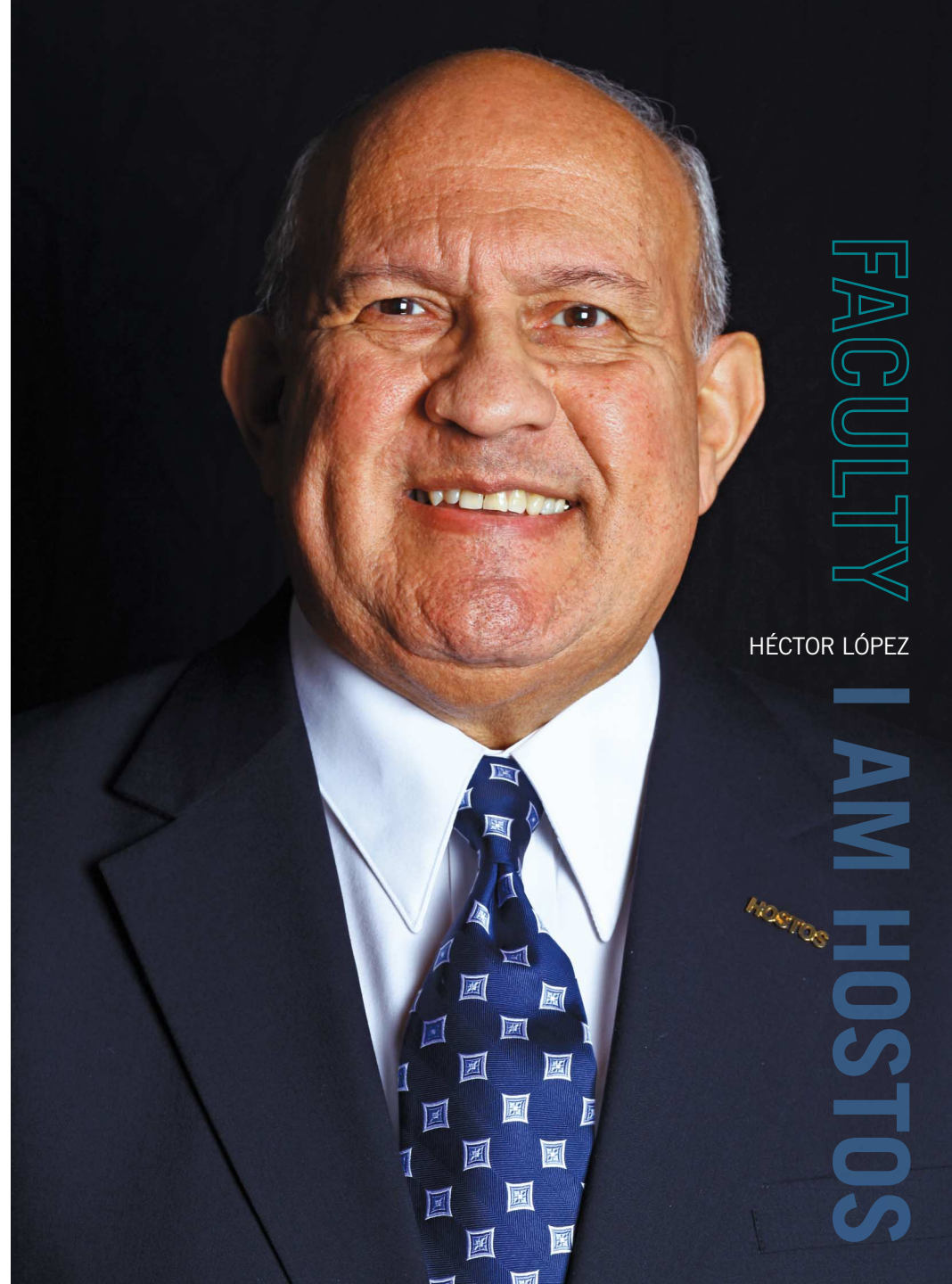
Real life experience imparts knowledge and engages students. In the Marine Corps, I worked in intelligence at Guantanamo Bay conducting interviews with Cubans seeking political asylum. They stole across these great salt flats, on hands and knees, with children. My technical know-how brought me to corporate America, where I worked at Verizon for 25 years. I wish I had found teaching sooner.

In the Marine Corps you are responsible for each other's well-being and survival. That's something you don't forget. Here we are responsible for the students, for other faculty, their personal goals and career aspirations.

AT LAST YEAR'S GRADUATION, A YOUNG LADY TOOK MY HAND. "PROFESSOR LÓPEZ," SHE SAID, "I AM HERE BECAUSE YOU GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED."

In academia there is more give and take than in the armed forces.

I would tell a young version of myself that the first step is to become interested in success.



FACULTY

HÉCTOR LÓPEZ

I AM HOSTOS

HOSTOS



ÁNGEL MORALES / FACULTY

LECTURER AND COORDINATOR,
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

My intuition speaks in plays. They call out to me. My passion for educational theater started in high school in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, when I was 25.

While working as a lighting designer at a high school, I saw the energy and enthusiasm of the students, and fell in love with the process.

In professional theater there is no talkback. In college theater the audience can ask the cast and crew questions about the play. With the book-of-the-semester project, students follow from page to stage. Plays like *Borinquen Vive En El Barrio* by Tere Martínez and *Song of Extinction* by E.M. Lewis work with themes for our diverse population. They meet designers and actors, speak with the playwright, and learn about the challenges of creating believable characters. A play takes on many dimensions. Students are touched by the poetry of the play, the set, the music and projections, the simple nonverbal gestures by an actor.

It's a spiritual experience when learning happens.



FACULTY

ÁNGEL MORALES

I AM HOSTOS



NELSON NUÑEZ-RODRÍGUEZ /
FACULTY

COORDINATOR AND ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR, PHYSICAL SCIENCES

I did my first science poster at age 13 on the effects of sea algae toxin on rat behavior. In Cuba, we got streamed early, and university was an important aspiration. In 1995, I left Cuba for Argentina, with \$35 and my experience in neuroscience. Argentina was so cold that I had to spend all my money on winter shoes.

In Argentina after you finish a Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellowship in America, in New York, often follows. So I left and started at Mount Sinai, with a few students and technicians doing research.

After that I chose teaching. College is great because your students want to be here, they want to learn.

HOSTOS REPRESENTS A
BETTER LIFE, THE RIGHT
TO DREAM.



FACULTY

NELSON
NUÑEZ-RODRÍGUEZ

I AM HOSTOS



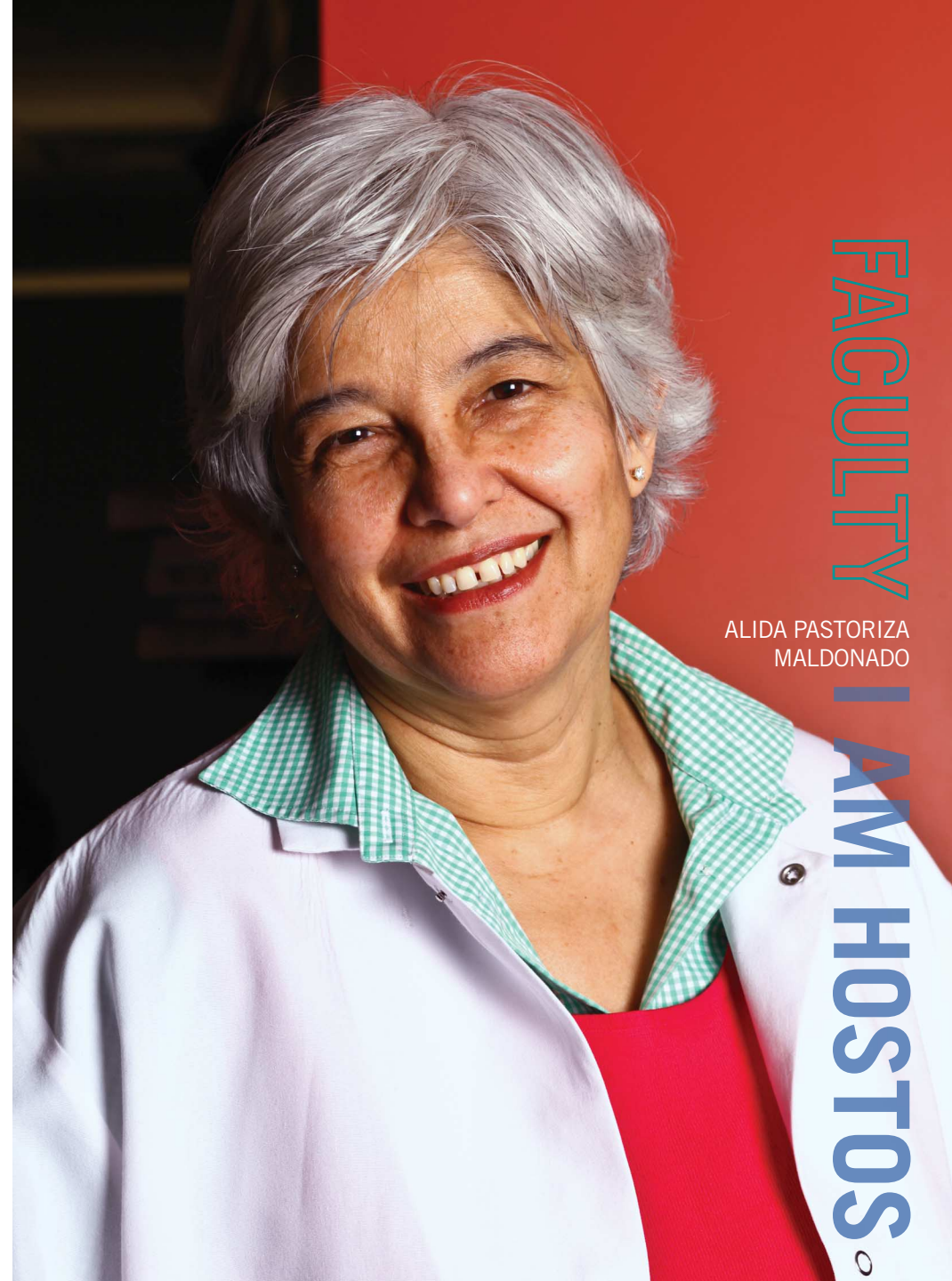
ALIDA PASTORIZA MALDONADO /
FACULTY

PROFESSOR, DENTAL HYGIENE

We lived in Hell's Kitchen, where our heat came from a kerosene stove stored inside a closet. When the building was condemned, my father refused the offer to move into public housing. They stayed, living as roomers, and my sis and I were sent to P.R. with my *abuela*. And those five years initiated and shaped my academic trajectory. I was only in school in Puerto Rico from third to seventh grade, and there was where I was told, and I believed, that I was college material. I don't remember my cousins or friends believing otherwise. Finally, the family was reunited in an apartment over a church in Chelsea.

Academically, I always needed to play "catch up." In 1971, after completing the B.S. degree, the professor at Hunter College who challenged me continuously nominated me to teach at the brand-new college called Hostos. My students also play catch up, but often without the structures that had been in place for me. I refuse to see my students as a cog in someone's wheel, but...

I SEE TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL VALUE IN WHAT STUDENTS CAN GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. HELPING THEM BECOME SELF-DIRECTED LEARNERS ADVANCES THAT DELIBERATE AGENDA.



ALIDA PASTORIZA
MALDONADO

FACULTY

I AM HOSTOS



MARTA RIVERA / FACULTY

LECTURER AND COORDINATOR,
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

The college has always had a very strong presence of intelligent, committed and resourceful women.

I came from Ponce, Puerto Rico, with a master's in clinical psychology, and I studied sociology and criminal justice at Fordham University. I have been at Hostos for more than 30 years. Originally the Sociology Department was housed in a church, Our Lady of Pity in Mott Haven. When the students took over the 500 Grand Concourse building in 1980, I worked as a mediator and a counselor. Despite the pressure to bring police in, the students were the voice that mattered, then and now.

I look upon them as role models.

For more than five years, I was the director of the Center for Women and Immigrant Rights, founded with Professor Allen Wernick, for issues of domestic and immigration law. I love everything about Hostos—the people, the mission, the commitment to the community.



FACULTY

MARTA RIVERA

I AM HOSTOS



MAYA SHARMA / FACULTY
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ENGLISH

In 1998, Professor Dorothy Pam and I started the Dramatic Reading series. It was one way to show the world that our students can speak in English and do it with style.

In 2002, students asked to present their own poems, to express what was in their hearts and minds with precise language.

I learned about service and responsibility growing up in Shillong, in the state of Assam in India, 23 miles from the Bangladesh border on a plateau in the hills. I spoke English from age five, along with Bangla, Hindi, Nepali, Assamese and French. Learning language in your own country speaks to your heart, by osmosis, by experience absorbed. Learning something alien through metaphor, by the beauty of the language, allows students to approach a new language as something pleasurable, the way they first learned it. This is the *raison d'être* for the English Club.



MAYA SHARMA

FACULTY
I AM
HOSTOS



GREG ADOTEVI / STUDENT

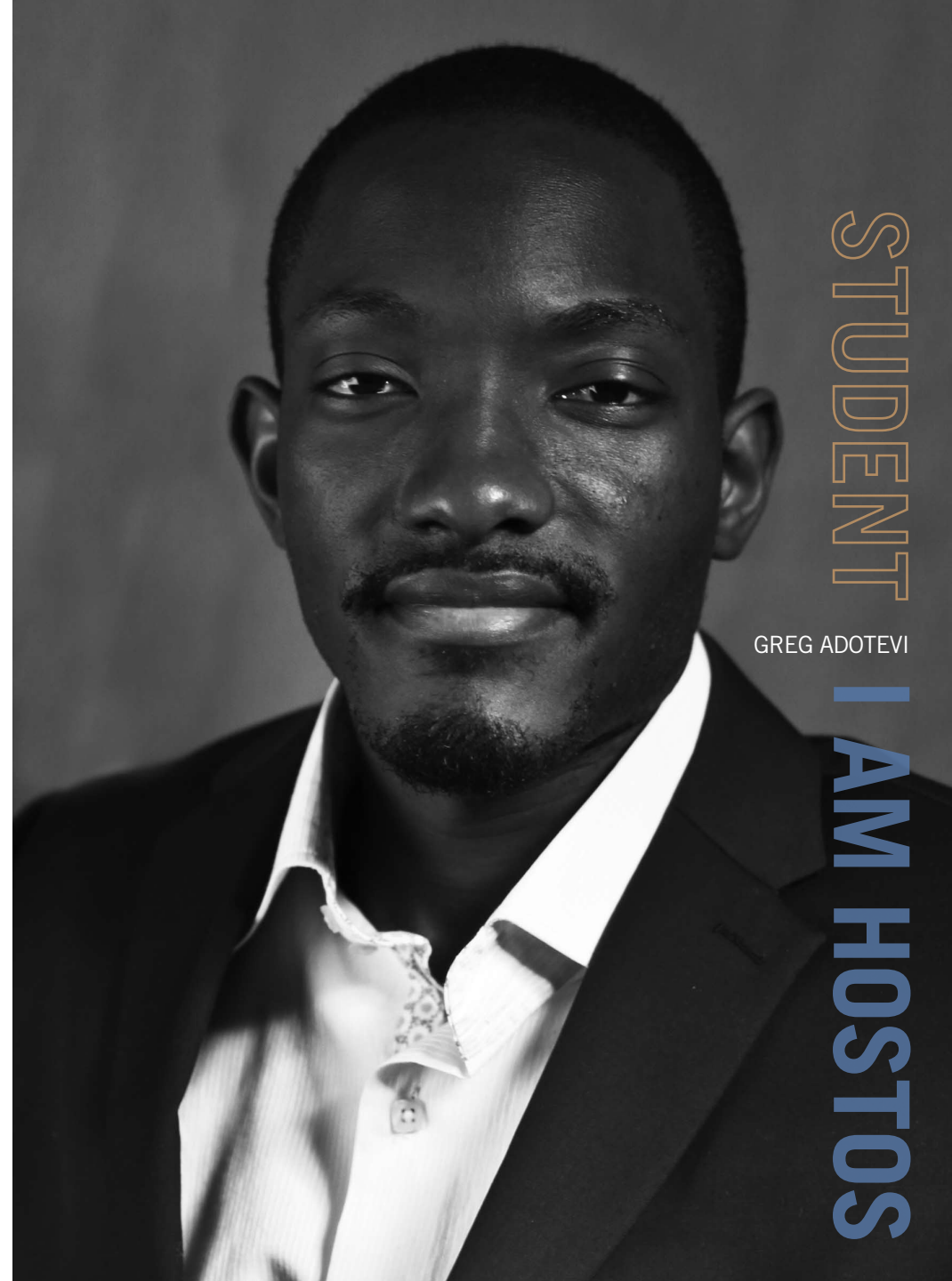
I'm from Central Africa, from Gabon, which is a French-speaking country. There, you make friends so easily. I miss my friends and my parents. I went through school there, even finished art school, but couldn't get the technological education I needed. I wanted to link technology with art.

Back home it's very hard to go far. If you study certain majors, you won't find work. My father said, "When you go out of the country, you have more opportunities to be successful."

I WAS LUCKY. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD WITH LANGUAGES AND WAS ABLE TO LEARN ENGLISH IN FOUR MONTHS. SO I DECIDED TO STUDY IN AMERICA.

My brother was a student here at Hostos and graduated in 2010 from accounting. He helped me a lot. Taught me how to live in New York. In my country, you can park anywhere you want, it's not a big deal. Not here.

Right now, I'm finishing up liberal arts, but I'm going to transfer to computer science at a four-year college. I'm thinking about City College.



STUDENT

GREG ADOTEVI

I AM HOSTOS



LESLY ARZU / STUDENT

I am originally from Puerto Cortés, Honduras. My hometown is surrounded by water. We played soccer and softball, but mostly I studied. I studied English by mail and read Cervantes. I came to the U.S. on a cold day around Thanksgiving in 1988. I was 18. For me, it was the opportunity for a better education. So many lights, far away from home. I lived with family in Flatbush, worked in a warehouse, filling orders for makeup and household items, all for \$6 an hour.

I wanted something better. I wanted to start school and got a job assisting an accountant in Bowling Green. I started at Kingsborough in Hospitality Management and earned a B.A. from Monroe College. I directed a children's program for a Bronx nonprofit and landed at Hostos in 2009. Here I completed a certificate program in early childhood development. The weekend schedule made it possible for me. The teachers were knowledgeable and available, especially Professor Santiago.

I worked and raised a family while also going to school. Hostos and my own hard work made that possible.



STUDENT

LESLY ARZU

I AM HOSTOS



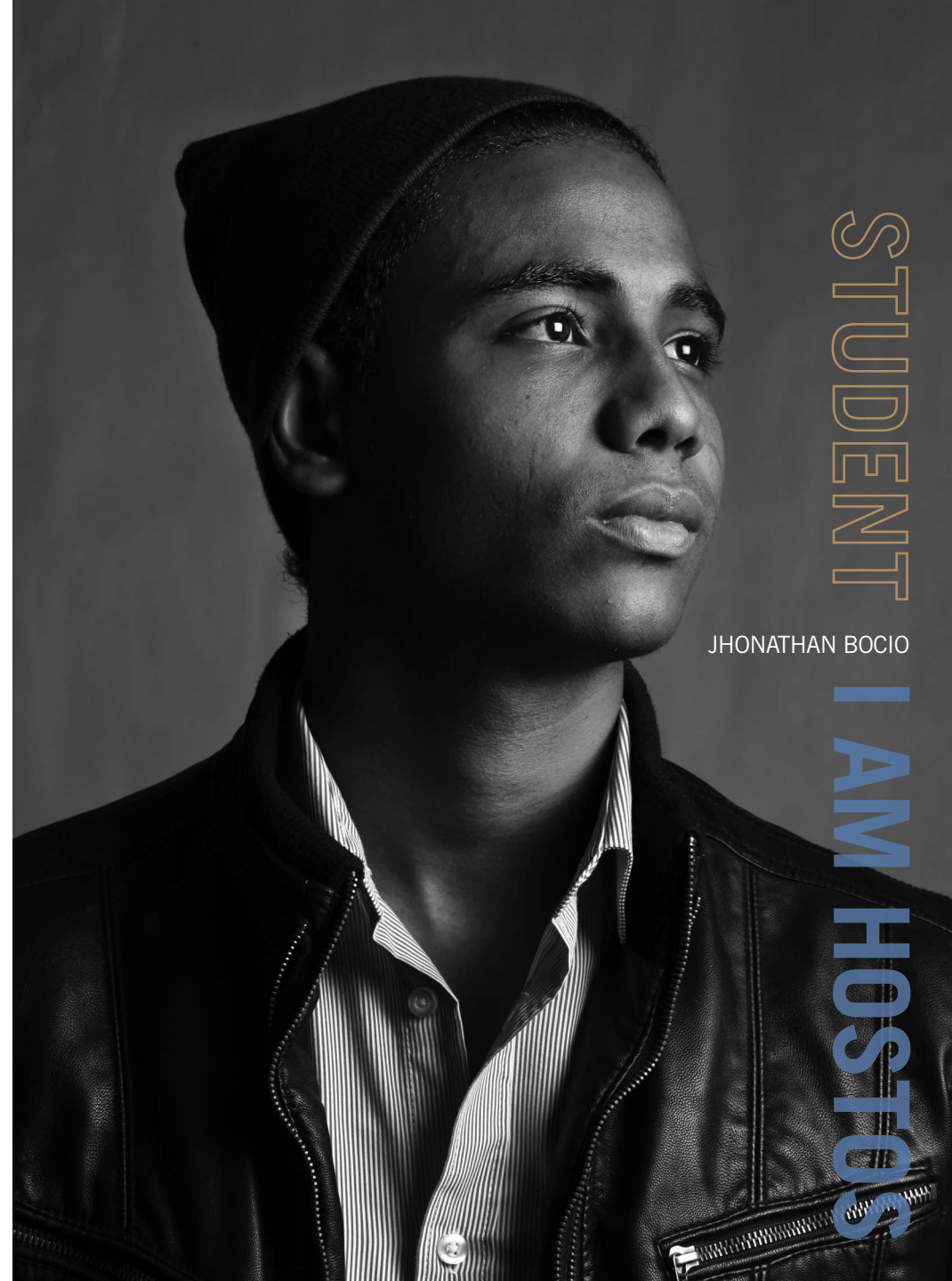
JHONATHAN BOCIO / STUDENT

I grew up in D.R. with my grandmother. She always said that I'd need school. My grandmother had my mom, six other daughters, and four sons. They are engineers, doctors, lawyers, but I wasn't thinking about school. High school changed everything. Once I started trying, people began treating me differently. I did my homework. I even thought I knew English.

I wanted to be with my mom in the Bronx. The day after I arrived, I realized my little sister was better at English than me. She was making fun of me. A friend from high school was at Hostos, and he did the paperwork for me. In the middle of the ESL program, I began to realize that I was learning. I made friends with people who speak Chinese, Greek, Arabic.

I'm one semester away from graduating in electrical engineering and then off to City College. I want to be a biomedical engineer.

**HOSTOS HAS GIVEN ME GUIDANCE,
CONFIDENCE, THE BASIS I NEED TO START
MY CAREER PATH.**



STUDENT

JHONATHAN BOCIO

I AM HOSTOS



SANDRA-MAY FLOWERS /
STUDENT

Hostos has given me a lot of opportunities, starting with the Leadership Academy, **WHICH LED TO MY SPEAKING AT CITY HALL AND IN ALBANY** in a Model Senate program, where we took the position of state senators.

I was scared to do it at first. I was an intern to Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson of the Bronx.

As student body president, I have been allowed to represent Hostos and have been given the opportunity to get additional funding for events. I get the opportunity to begin things like the extreme team of volunteers. We helped with Hurricane Sandy and the AIDS walk, and went to D.C. for President Obama's inauguration.



STUDENT

SANDRA-MAY
FLOWERS

I AM HOSTOS



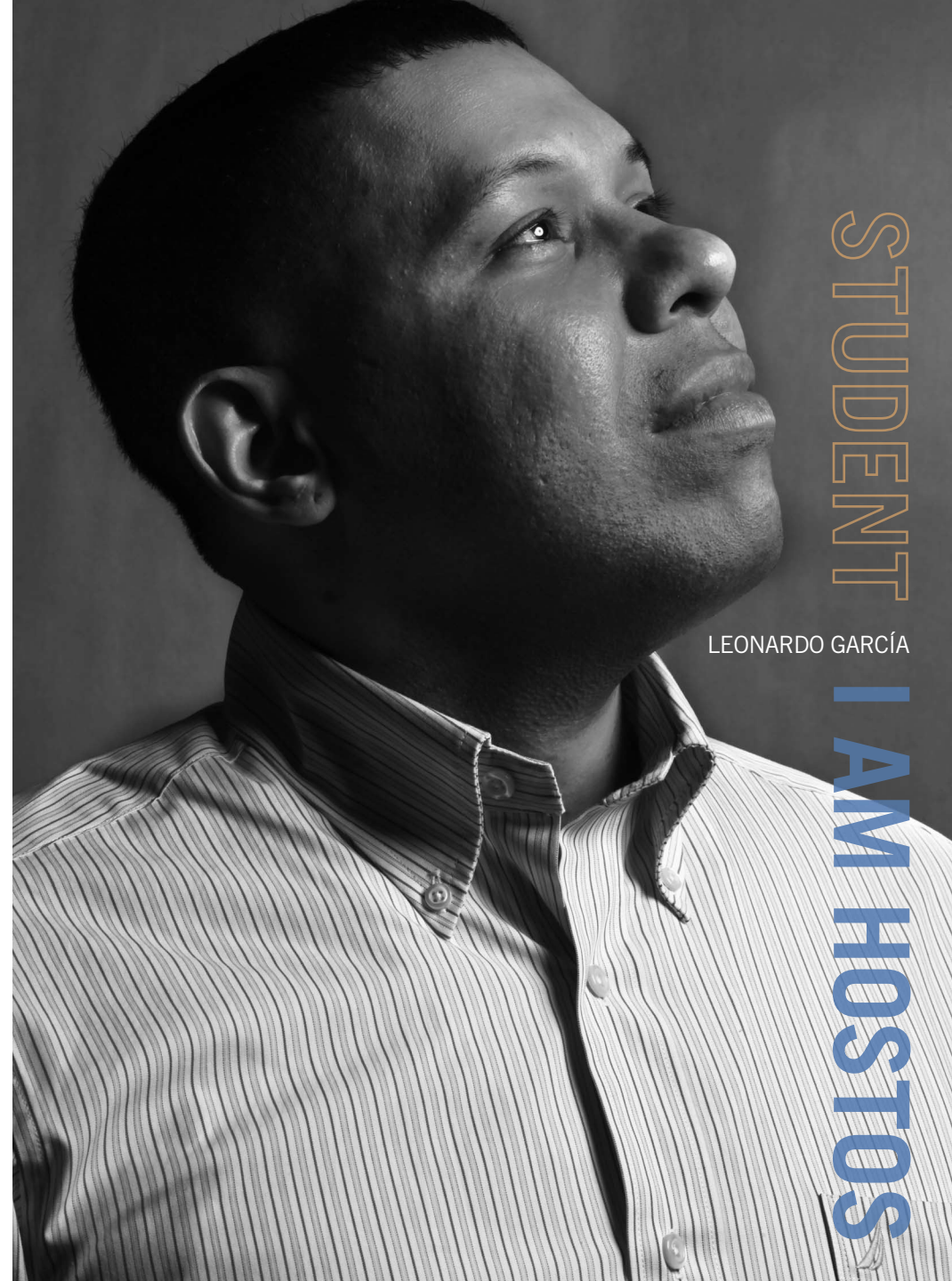
LEONARDO GARCÍA / STUDENT

Being raised in Washington Heights was challenging, always a conflict of influences, neighbors, friends from school, people dropping out, worrying about sneakers, jeans, haircuts, dinners, trying to outdo each other, impress each other, impress girls. You get caught up. Those are the circumstances of life.

Fast forward. I always wanted to go to college. I managed to qualify for a program that helped me out with training, education. I liked photography, so I thought medical imagery, that's sort of photography.

I started at Hostos in 2005. Then I got kidney stones. Indescribable. The pain is something. One thing led to another, and I had to take a couple of years off, but came back with a vengeance. Most of my life I didn't finish things. But this time, I wanted to show my daughter what you could do with the right focus. I was student of the month in December. Last year, I won an essay prize from the New York State Society of Radiological Sciences. A brighter future now for my family.

I have accomplished things I didn't think I was capable of. Knowledge is power.



LEONARDO GARCÍA

STUDENT
I AM
HOSTOS



DAYANA GONZÁLEZ / STUDENT

When I was young in Cuba, I loved to work in the countryside, planting potatoes, tomatoes, guava, harvesting coffee in October on the rainy mountainside. I was one of 500 students together for 45 days in voluntary work created by Che Guevara. An internal organ was free if you needed one, but we didn't have free expression.

As a nurse I hope I can help other people. At Hostos, I love the diversity of so many people from so many countries. I learned to be open-minded.

BEFORE HOSTOS, LIFE WAS LIKE SLOW MOTION.

I won a Charles Braver CUNY scholarship. Writing about a kid in the '60s Bronx with guns, knives and drugs. Despite all the bad things, the person succeeded. It was an inspiration. In my first class of anatomy and physiology, I started to cry. I called my husband. The heart, the liver... I didn't understand medical terminology, so I worked double. I did it. My professor, Zvi Ostrin, was wonderful.



DAYANA GONZÁLEZ

STUDENT I AM HOSTOS



YISMERY MARTÍNEZ / STUDENT

When I lived in D.R., I loved going to the movies—cop movies, anything with justice. Three years ago, I came here. Even though I was just a sophomore, I wanted to start saving money for college. I didn't know much English. I was working at McDonalds, which was an even bigger motivator.

Being a first-generation college student, I have to be a problem solver and do everything for myself.

I want to be a good person for society, and even thought about joining the Marines, but I couldn't do it because I wanted to finish my education. I worked so hard to improve my academics, I had to keep going.

I want to combine the study of criminology with accounting and learn how to be a forensic accountant.

From here I want to go to John Jay, but I don't want to stop there, either. I want to maybe do a master's or a Ph.D.

I don't know where I'll end up, but I still think about being in the FBI. I still love the movies.



STUDENT

YISMERY MARTÍNEZ

I AM HOSTOS



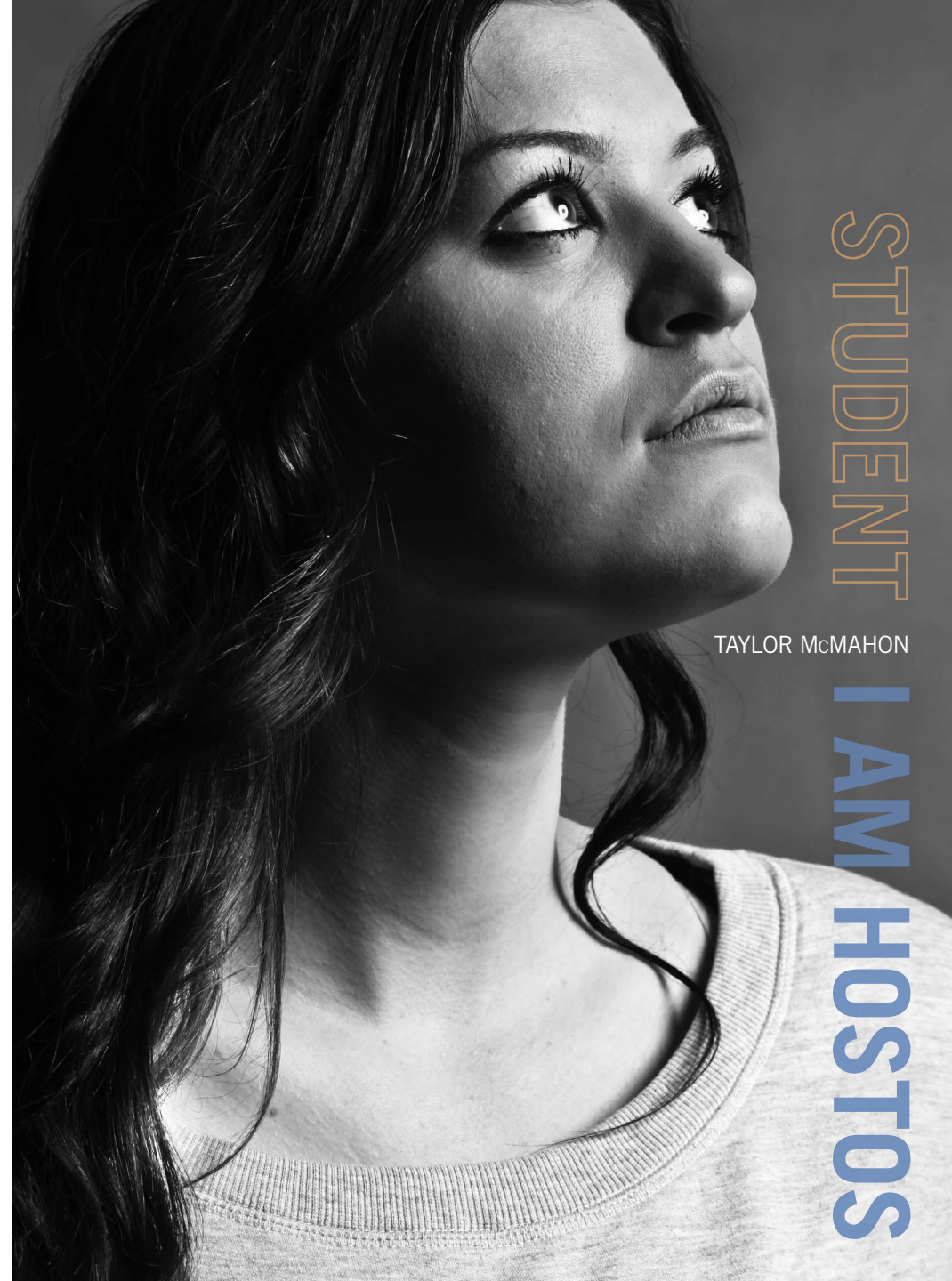
TAYLOR McMAHON / STUDENT

I'm originally from Pittsburgh, where my father owned a bar and restaurant. I came to New York in 2007. I love the city, the people, the excitement.

I'll be the first person in my family to finish college, **AND THIS YEAR I MADE THE DEAN'S LIST WITH A 3.865.**

I love to read poetry, especially Edgar Allan Poe. I host study groups twice a week, and I'm a part of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. The services like Single Stop and Work-Study at Hostos have really helped me to achieve good grades.

I live near Hostos and do clinical work at Lincoln Hospital, where I get to help a lot of people. It's rated one of the top trauma wards in the city. We care for everyone from a brand-new mother to someone who comes in with a gunshot wound. It's a lot different than home. In the five years I've been here, my neighborhood is changing for the better. I would like to be a part of that.



TAYLOR McMAHON

STUDENT
I AM
HOSTOS



MANNY PEÑA / STUDENT

I came here from D.R. at 12, Las Matas de Santa Cruz. When I was little, everyone knew everyone. Family was half the town.

I want to go back, but the times never work. I can't let my sisters see me miss school. It's too important to me, to my family, to my grandmother. My mother only got as far as middle school. She always worked in a factory. She said, "If you don't have an education, you are just part of the endless crowd."

When I was in high school, I was in the gospel choir, and it kept me coming back to school. I still have my old teacher's phone number. I don't know why but I asked about Digital Design, and then I met Rees Shad, and I knew I found another family. Instantly. I gave it a try, just to see how it went. Now, I look forward to coming to school. Coming to Hostos was destiny for me.

YOU GET TO SHINE HERE.



STUDENT

MANNY PEÑA

I AM HOSTOS



EBRAHIM RASHEED / STUDENT

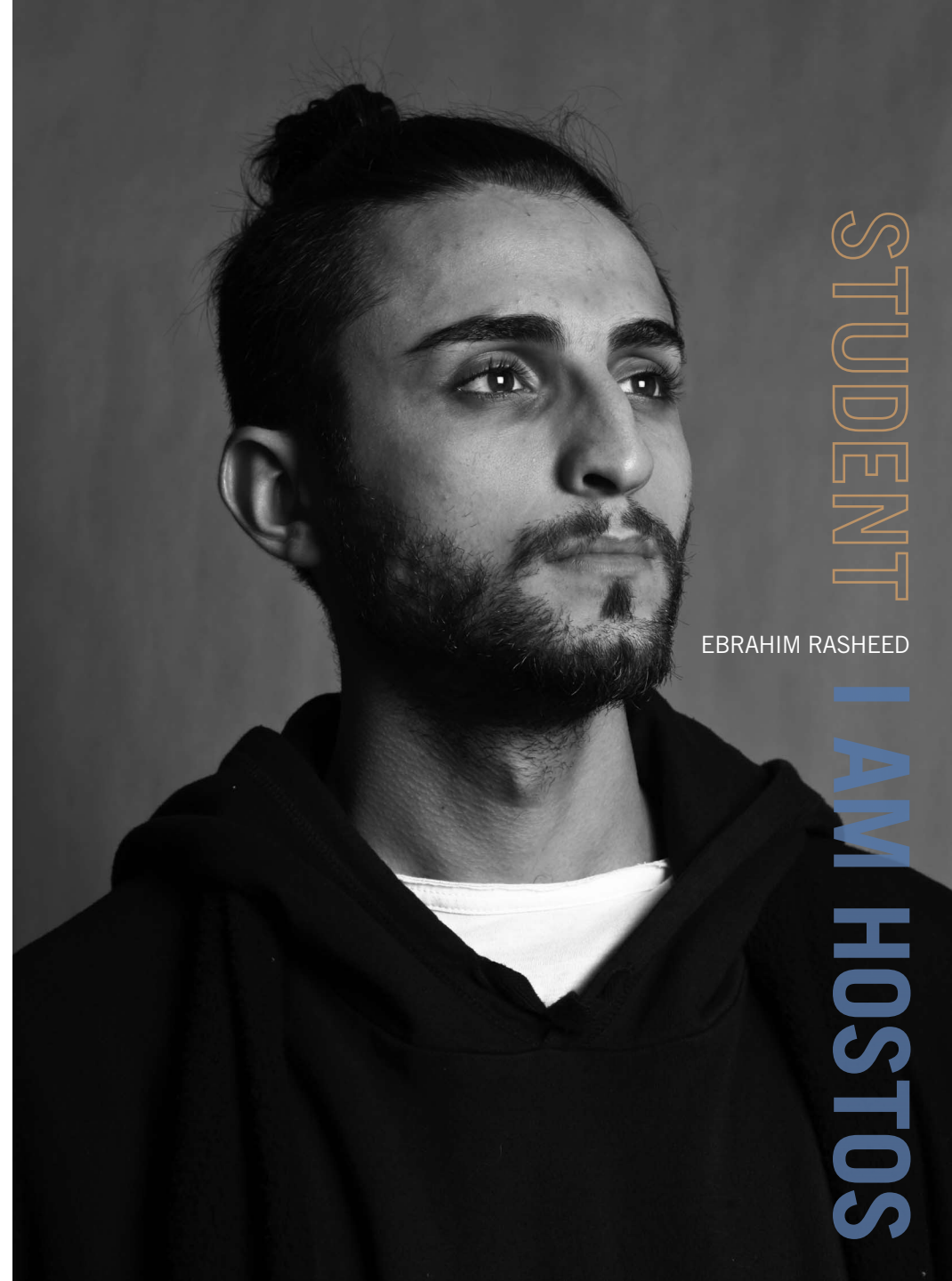
I have an Iraqi background. My parents, both professionals, wanted to know what my big thing was going to be. “Come on,” they said, “doctor, dentist, lawyer.”

My parents always wanted better, but I became an artist. I performed at Carnegie Hall at 16. Then a teacher paid for me to attend Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre. For a little while, I was a counselor at Mosholu Community Center.

“When are you going to college?” asked my parents. I told them I was going to be a starving actor. My mother said, “No, come to Hostos.” So here I am.

I’VE BEEN IN FIVE PRODUCTIONS HERE, THREE OF WHICH HAVE GONE OFF TO COMPETITION. THIS SPRING I’M GOING TO THE EDINBURGH FRINGE FESTIVAL.

I want to finish and transfer to Julliard or NYU. In a perfect world, a student should not be working and being a student. Everything for me is out of pocket, but now, it’s all coming together.



EBRAHIM RASHEED

STUDENT
I AM
HOSTOS



SARAH APONTE / ALUMNA

CHIEF LIBRARIAN / ASST. PROFESSOR,
CUNY DOMINICAN STUDIES INSTITUTE
AND THE CITY COLLEGE LIBRARIES

When I came to the U.S. with my parents, I knew no one.

When I got to Hostos, it was like WOW! I felt alive. I could talk about my dreams with people who were also immigrants and who understood the process. I felt at home.

The professors were very kind and worked along with me. It was a very welcoming environment. I lived in the library. It was a place that I could go and study. The great thing about it was when I found out we could check books out, something we could not do in the Dominican Republic. I loved literature and read fiction, looking to polish my English. *The Three Musketeers* by Dumas—that's one of the first books I read here in English.

I am now the chief librarian at the Dominican Institute. When I came to the institute there was no library, so we began by collecting books and manuscripts from the community at large. My first community in America was Hostos.



ALUMNA

SARAH APONTE

I AM HOSTOS



FERNANDO AQUINO / ALUMNUS

PRESS SECRETARY FOR THE NEW YORK
STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Hostos Community College helped me to become what I want to be. Since I was a teenager in a small town in the Dominican Republic, I have always been seeking opportunities to help my community. When I came to Hostos, I did not speak English. Hostos helped me make the transition from a career in journalism to one in government and politics.

I FOUND OUT THAT THE SAME PROFESSORS WHO WERE TEACHING AT HOSTOS WERE ALSO TEACHING AT PLACES LIKE COLUMBIA.

When I came here, I was working as a reporter. While I was here, I started working for the Democratic caucus of the New York State Senate. There I put in practice what I learned at Hostos.

I hope that families out there will take advantage of what is right here in the Bronx—that they come for a visit and learn about all the services this college is providing. This college is providing very good opportunities for young kids who are looking to live part of the American Dream.



FERNANDO AQUINO

ALUMNUS
I AM HOSTOS



FENIX ARIAS / ALUMNA

DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC TESTING,
YORK COLLEGE; ADJUNCT LECTURER,
JOHN JAY COLLEGE

I love to read about invisible groups, giving them a voice. I came to Hostos in 1993 and transferred to Columbia University. I pursued a master's at the

School of International and Public Affairs. My dad died the same year of my graduation from Columbia, so he did not get to see the fruit of his labors. He went only as far as the third grade. I felt I owed it to him to do something different with my life.

Growing up, I had questions: Why couldn't someone like my dad get an education? Why did he struggle so much to make ends meet? He said, "Most of the girls around me, including my own nieces, have gotten pregnant right out of high school or during high school; so that's the reason I didn't want you in New York during your high school years." He wanted more for us. I think he planted that seed of wanting more.

I REALIZED THROUGH MY STUDIES THAT WITHOUT NETWORKING SOCIAL CAPITAL, WE CANNOT REALLY GET MORE. NOW I HAVE A PH.D., AND I WANT TO BE IN A POSITION WHERE POLICY IS AFFECTED AND I CAN BE A VOICE FOR MINORITIES.



ALUMNA
FENIX ARIAS
I AM HOSTOS



MIRKEYA CAPELLÁN / ALUMNA

SENIOR MANAGER, SOGETI USA

In 1987, when I came from the Dominican Republic, I did not speak the language. I was lucky to find Hostos. The objective was to get two years and transfer to Hunter College. I had four jobs: math tutor, peer advisor, at McDonalds on Queens Boulevard, and in a clothing store in Sunnyside, Queens. I was saving money to give to my mother in the Dominican Republic. It took four full years to complete my bachelor's. I met my husband at Hostos. He pretended he didn't know the math problems. We are married now for almost 22 years.

Getting a job without experience was hard. I worked data entry on 34th Street. I learned about a grad assistantship and got my master's in information systems at Pace University. I was interviewed by a well-known consulting firm and have been working for them ever since.

Hostos was everything to me. Without it, I would not be here. **EVERYONE HAS AN AMERICAN DREAM—MINE, I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IT.**



MIRKEYA CAPELLÁN

ALUMNA

I AM HOSTOS



CECILIA GALLARDO / ALUMNA
NURSE

I am from Quito, Ecuador, in the coldest area in the Andes Mountains. My father used to work in a textile factory and as a mechanic for the air force, and my mom stayed home with the four girls.

I studied medicine in Romania on scholarship, but under Ceausescu, foreigners were not allowed to work.

I came here and lived with family on Morris Avenue and 168th Street, cleaning apartments and baby-sitting. On my student visa, I studied English, and worked as a health care interpreter and for EMS in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens for about 10 years. Hostos offered the courses I needed. I passed all my exams with A's. I received help from the disabilities office, had time to study, access to computers. It's like my house was Hostos. After finishing the nursing program, I found a job at Bronx Lebanon on Mt. Eden Avenue. My father said, "Do your best. No one is going to give you anything." My own hard work made that possible.



ALUMNA

CECILIA GALLARDO

I AM HOSTOS



**SAMANTHA JACKSON /
ALUMNA**

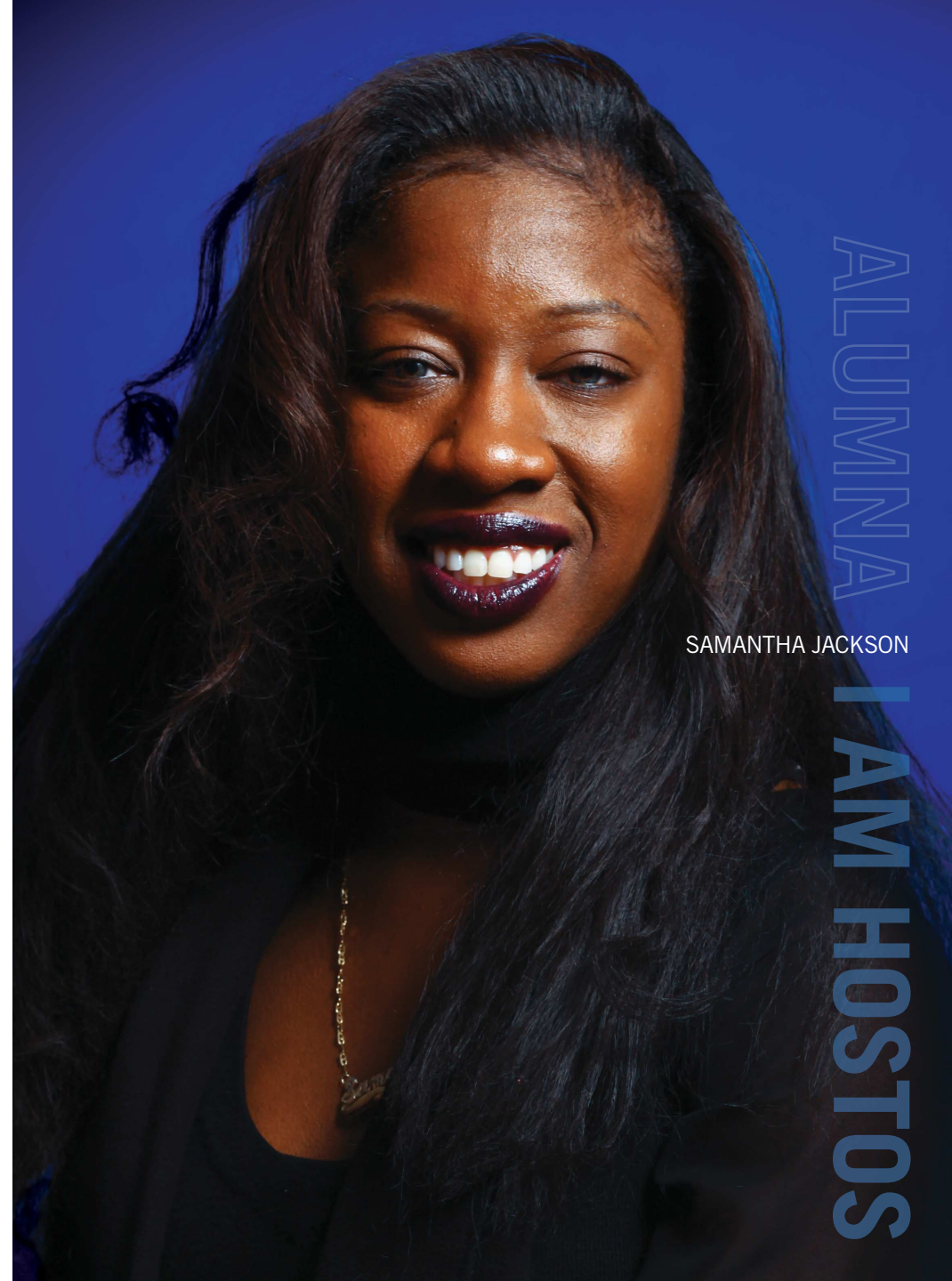
RECENT GRADUATE, BROWN UNIVERSITY

While at Hostos, I was in the Serrano Scholars program.

I WENT ON TO A FULL SCHOLARSHIP AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY TO STUDY INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND NEXT A MASTER'S IN URBAN EDUCATION POLICY AT BROWN UNIVERSITY.

At Hostos, I had a class with Weldon Williams where we studied structural racism. I knew there was a pressing need for people in communities of color to be strategically involved in the policy and decision-making regarding issues that affect our personal lives.

My mother is very proud. She really stressed education, and she, my father and grandmother instilled a drive for higher education. One of the reasons I decided to study what I did came about from looking at domestic issues and others that oppress people on the margins of society. I paid a lot of attention to neo-colonialism and how it affects life, even here in the United States. Without Hostos, I would not have ended up with the perspective about these issues that I have.



SAMANTHA JACKSON

ALUMNA

I AM HOSTOS



ANA MARIA PAUNOIU / ALUMNA

STUDENT, JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

We were afraid even to speak in our own houses. Growing up under Ceausescu was awful, a period of darkness. Everything was so controlled. We barely understood the world. So after the revolution, I wanted to become a journalist. I went to college, and for six years, I was a broadcaster in Bucharest. We covered social justice issues, working, trying to reach out to the people with the means to help out. Hoping others would hear the cry.

I first came to America from Romania, unprepared to be a student at the college level. Hostos was a privilege.

The skills I received at Hostos helped me to move forward and succeed.

I'm very focused and ambitious, and finished here in just a year and a half. I'd like to get a master's degree in public administration, maybe work for Homeland Security, help people with immigration, but I'm open to whatever comes along and am ready for more challenges.



ALUMNA

ANA MARIA PAUNOIU

I AM HOSTOS



GERALDINE PERRI / ALUMNA

SUPERINTENDENT / PRESIDENT,
CITRUS COLLEGE

I was born and raised in the Bronx. My mother comes from here in Mott Haven. She went to Hostos for Dental Hygiene, and it was natural to follow in her footsteps. When I completed Hostos, I went on to NYU, but I always kept in touch with the college. I got to prepare a class. At that time, the college faced a challenge because a lot of the students were not doing very well on the national boards. I came to Hostos every week, and we did extra stuff to prepare the students. Of course we were thrilled when 100 percent passed.

Opportunity came. I was fortunate to get a position as an adjunct instructor at Hostos, to get my foot in the door in the Dental Hygiene program. This must have been around 1981.

**I HAVE A PASSION FOR
GETTING PEOPLE TO SEE
THEIR OWN CAPABILITIES.**

I get a kick out of seeing these 20-somethings come in, to see the change, their transition into professionals.



ALUMNA

GERALDINE PERRI

I AM HOSTOS



CELINA SOTOMAYOR / ALUMNA

Excerpt from *My Beloved World* by Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the U.S. and daughter of Hostos graduate Celina Sotomayor

“The problem was that my mother was scared out of her wits. Never mind that she was one very intelligent and ambitious woman. Never mind that Hostos

Community College, where she enrolled, was specially created to serve the South Bronx Latino Community with a bilingual program for students like my mother. Never mind that she had done the work of a registered nurse unofficially for years, if only because Prospect Hospital was so tiny, and she was so well trusted there.

“My mother was tortured by lack of confidence in her own mental ability. Most of the time she beat back her fear with furious effort.

“SHE WOULD CRACK THE BOOKS AS SOON AS SHE WALKED IN THE DOOR, AND MIDNIGHT WOULD FIND HER STILL STUDYING.

“Seeing my mother get back to her studies was all the proof I needed that a chain of emotion can persuade when one forged of logic won’t hold. But more important was her example that a surplus of effort could overcome a deficit of confidence. It was something I would remember often in years ahead, whenever faced with fears that I wasn’t smart enough to succeed.”

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ALUMNA

CELINA SOTOMAYOR

I AM HOSTOS



SAUDY TEJADA / ALUMNA
MANAGER, INDIVIDUAL & CORPORATE
GIVING, BRONX RIVER ALLIANCE

I am just grateful for
THE OPPORTUNITY
THAT HOSTOS GIVES TO
PEOPLE to rebuild their lives.

I was confronted with difficult personal circumstances when I first came to Hostos. My mom, my single parent, died. Hostos welcomed me with open doors and gave me the second chance to rebuild my life. I wasn't sure where my career was headed, and with a liberal arts degree, I could apply it to the career of my choice. All of my credits were able to transfer to Fordham, where I majored in history and graduated in a year and a half. I went on to the New School, where I got my master's in nonprofit organization management.

I started working for the Bronx River Alliance as a grant writer. After a year I have been promoted to manager of individual and corporate giving. We have been restoring the river for the past 11 years and are looking forward to a flotilla on May 11, including our first 5K canoe race.



SAUDY TEJADA

ALUMNA
I AM HOSTOS



NELSON TORRES / ALUMNUS

SITE DIRECTOR,
BRONX HISPANIC AIDS FORUM

My first professional job was working in the Registrar's Office. I was a student at Hostos from 1992 to 1995 in public administration. I am a social worker in a nonprofit organization, as a site director, called Hispanic Aids Forum. I learned my leadership skills at Hostos.

When I moved from Puerto Rico in 1988, my family was not okay with my being gay. I found Hostos and became a member of the LAGUF, the Lesbian And Gay United Force. I started learning about creating and mobilizing community in order to create social action.

We made history here, educating the students whenever we saw something affecting the LGBT community.

Once we had an issue with a staff member at registration. We mobilized and let people know it's not okay to discriminate. We started the Coming Out Event here at Hostos—the largest event of its kind in the Bronx. We are celebrating Coming Out's tenth anniversary. Hostos was the basis for me to become what I am today.



NELSON TORRES

ALUMNUS
I AM HOSTOS



VAN C. TRAN / ALUMNUS

SCHOLAR; PH.D., HARVARD UNIVERSITY
IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that many of the issues I struggled with and became interested in were there at Hostos Community College; also in the South Bronx, and also in New York City. When I first got to Hostos, I was struck by the ethnic and interracial diversity of the student body. I was confused because I was told as an outsider, prior to arriving in the U.S., that America was black and white. But when I arrived, I was amazed at how astonishingly diverse New York and Hostos were.

We had people from every corner of the globe at Hostos.

I remember Mexicans and Cubans, a lot of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, and African-Americans—because of the location of Hostos and because Hostos was established to serve the needs of the population of the South Bronx. These people were my classmates, and I was confused because I didn't know who they were and where they came from. More importantly, I wanted to understand their history, their biography, and their personal story; and that really was the beginning of my work.



ALUMNUS

VAN C. TRAN

I AM HOSTOS



ARNALDO BERNABE / STAFF

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY

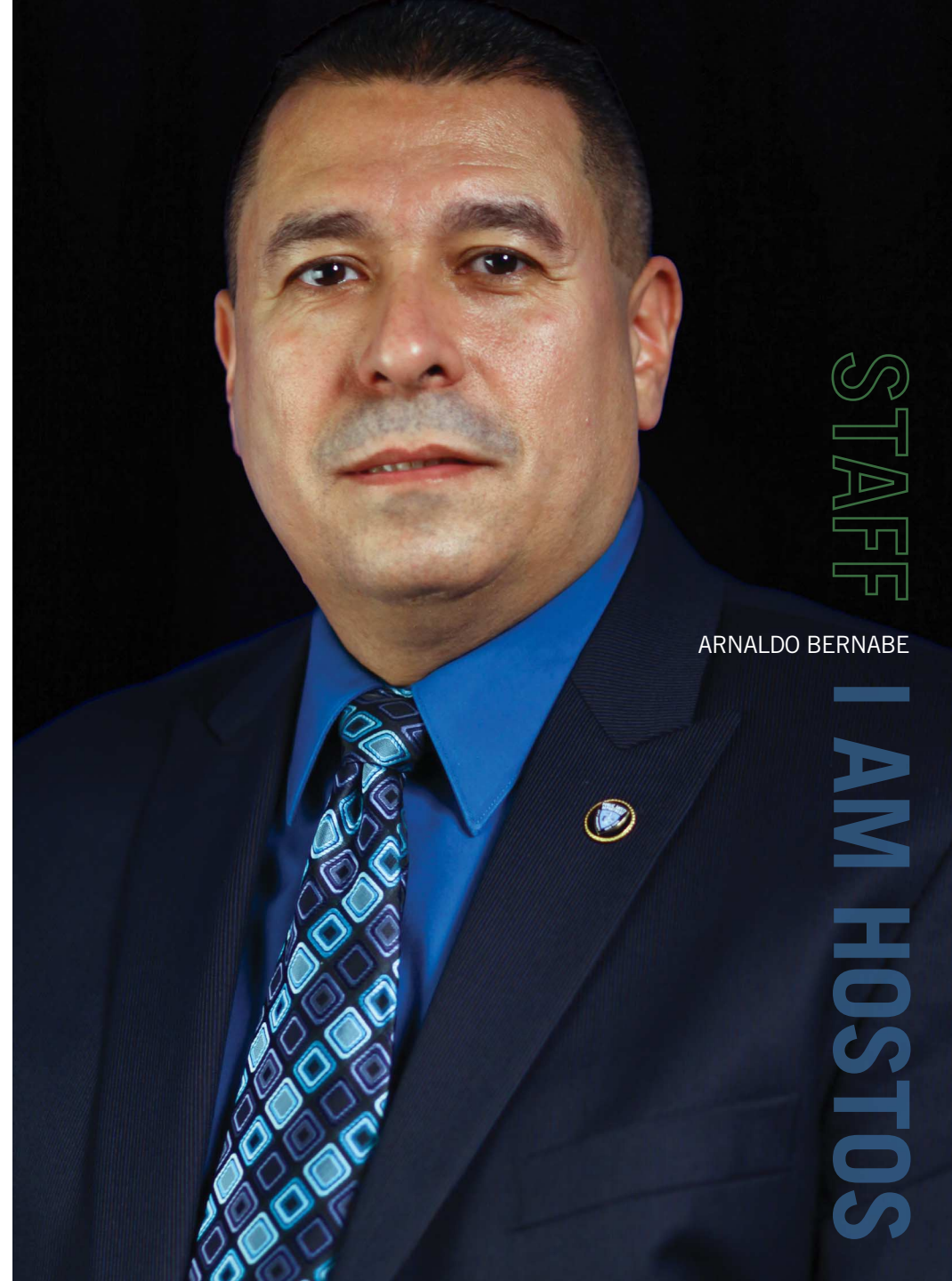
Alphabet City, Operation Pressure Point, the glory years, Loisaida. My dad, a Korean War vet, worked as a deli man, owned a restaurant on West 10th, always worked for himself, drove a cab.

I wanted to go to Syracuse to be a journalist, but I didn't have any money. "We don't apply for financial aid or collect welfare," said Dad, "not in this family." To save up and escape Dad's disciplinary ways, I joined the Marines. Spent six years as an MP at a naval station in Rota, Spain, the European Theater. Back home, I worked security for the Board of Ed.

As a kid I wanted something bigger, to help people.

A fare told my dad about a sergeant's test. I passed, landing at Hostos. At roll call I encourage the officers. Out of 33 officers, half are in school.

I could have left, but I wanted to live up to the commitment that people like Cynthia Jones made. To go as far as I could, like Justice Sotomayor.



ARNALDO BERNABE

STAFF
I AM HOSTOS



ALDRIN BONILLA / STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CUNY IN THE HEIGHTS

When I was 22 years old, I worked in South Africa for the African National Congress. **I WAS NELSON MANDELA'S LEAD MAN IN THE TRANSITION BEFORE HE BECAME PRESIDENT.**

I even had the honor of typing his speech to the United Nations from his handwritten draft. He had been out of prison for two years. He delighted in his grandchildren. I was a glorified errand boy, but I took great pleasure looking for special orthopedic socks all over town for the poor circulation in his legs. He was 75 then. He's 94 now. It's hard to believe he's still alive.

Education is very important. In Continuing Education we see the amount of work that needs to be done with getting individuals to transition from a GED to community college. Our students need someone in a lifelong learning environment, someone connected to a traditional university and all its resources: the brick and mortar, financial aid, admissions, bursars, academic affairs. It can be pretty intimidating, and our students need someone to coach them through.



ALDRIN BONILLA

STAFF
I AM
HOSTOS



MARÍA CANO / STAFF

DIRECTOR, COPE PROGRAM

Experience with nontraditional students touched me—the turmoil of their existences. Working mothers with lots of kids and husbands to take care of, domestic violence, doing homework at three in the morning, brave students whose disabilities were not barriers but motivation. It used to be that half our students were on public assistance; now it's less than 10 percent. It was outside of my mission, but I went with them to court at 60 Centre Street in Manhattan to fight for their welfare money, for rent, for food stamps. I became like a mini-lawyer. This led to my involvement with CASES, working with criminal offenders between the ages of 16 and 24, where they get a second chance if they succeed in school. For our dilapidated offices, we got better furniture so it looked warmer and more intimate—less like social services.

I learned that everything that does not glitter could still be golden.

“What are you doing here?” the judge used to ask. “Who are you?”

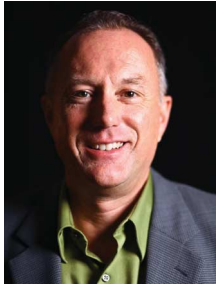
“I am Hostos,” I'd say.



STAFF

MARÍA CANO

I AM HOSTOS



WILLIAM CASARI / STAFF

COLLEGE ARCHIVIST AND
INSTRUCTION LIBRARIAN

Once I was helping a blind student. She came to the library to save something on her flash drive. “Can you help me?” she asked. I took a deep breath, and together we made it through the uncomfortable beginning. Empathy works both ways. My job became to see what’s missing and to fill that space.

When you are in search of community, how do you find it? When you love gardens and trees, you go to the park. On weekends I lead volunteer events at Franz Sigel Park, between Hostos and where I live here on the Grand Concourse. That’s just a few blocks away.

I came from Nebraska to the big city and thought: How is my contribution possibly going to matter with eight million people? Should I play the freak in a clown suit? Here I am dressed like a bank teller teaching at a community college.

What I thought when I came to the city—about not making a difference—it’s so not true.



STAFF

WILLIAM CASARI

I AM HOSTOS



FERN CHAN / STAFF

DIRECTOR, CUNY CareerPATH

I come from a commonwealth country, Malaysia. My father was a man of the press. The prime minister banned the newspaper after an exposé about disappeared political dissidents, so we went to New Zealand. I was 11.

I always wanted to learn languages, work for the United Nations, and save the world. I speak French, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin and English. I arrived in New York at 24 with an international law degree and came to Hostos to help with the 40th anniversary. I volunteer with the Red Cross, help people who have been through hurricanes, natural disasters. When you have a passion to help, you find a way. The universe has a way of reminding you what you're here for.

In Continuing Education we help people who are lost find a way, with job training and education.

With compassion, by listening, you keep it together for people who are falling apart. Which doesn't mean I don't fall to pieces once I am alone in my office.



STAFF

FERN CHAN

I AM HOSTOS



MADELINE CRUZ / STAFF
SINGLE STOP SERVICES COORDINATOR

I came to New York in 1983 and entered Hostos as an ESL student. I'm from Humacao, Puerto Rico. I had no family, only two aunts. One of my aunts worked in the admissions office until she retired. I began working as a college assistant in Dental Hygiene, then in College Discovery and Humanities. I studied office technology and graduated as bilingual secretary. It's not the same when you are by yourself, are young and inexperienced, but I made up my mind and decided to set some goals. I graduated from Hostos and went on to Mercy College while continuing to work in the president's office. And now I am the Single Stop coordinator. We give support to students.

I tell them, "If I did it, then you can also. Set short- and long-term goals, follow through. Never give up on your dreams."

Single Stop was nominated for the 2012 *Examples of Excelencia Award*.

Students are the important ones, their education, their dreams and their goals.



STAFF

MADELINE CRUZ

I AM HOSTOS



FANNY DUMANCELA / STAFF

FINANCE BUDGET DIRECTOR

I am from Ecuador, from Riobamba, which is in a province named for one of the highest volcanic mountains, Chimborazo. I went back last August and took my 12-year-old son to admire the peace and beauty I knew as a child. I had so many dreams when I was little. The United States just happened. My father ran a hardware store on 96th Street in Manhattan. We lived on 207th Street in Washington Heights and 107th Avenue in Queens. I started at Hostos in 1987 in the Accounting Department and then moved to the Budget Office.

Hostos gave me the opportunity to study and work part time with interested teachers who encouraged me. I was able to work around my schedule. Starting as a student gave me the opportunity to work.

I tell my sons, “You create habits that lead to success...education is the door to a better future.”



FANNY DUMANCELA

STAFF
I AM HOSTOS



JASON LIBFELD / STAFF
STUDENT LEADERSHIP COORDINATOR

I moved from the upper end of the Concourse to Co-op City, then finally to City Island. I'm as old as Hostos, a December baby. Before going to Costa Rica last summer, I'd only been out of the country once.

In November 2007, I arrived at Hostos looking for something new. I'd taught in high school and at college. Then I saw this weird ad for a leadership coordinator. One of my former students showed it to me. She'd been a tutor here, a math major.

She said, "You'd be good for this." I said, "What's a leadership coordinator?" She said, "You do all this stuff at the top of the ad, working with students, changing lives." I said I'd give it a try. Five years on, it's been the best job I've ever had in my life.

IN THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY, WE HAVE STUDENTS FROM 68 COUNTRIES. I CAN HEAR FARSI, RARE DIALECTS FROM GHANA. I MIGHT NOT HAVE TRAVELLED MUCH, BUT THE WORLD HAS COME TO ME.



JASON LIBFELD

STAFF
I AM HOSTOS



DIAHANN McFARLANE / STAFF

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
& SAFETY DIRECTOR

Of course you're going to college—this is something I heard constantly when I was growing up. I thought my father made it up, but it was a slogan from

United Negro College Fund.

Born in Manhattan, I was raised and still live in Teaneck, New Jersey. I have a twin brother and three other siblings. Between the five of us, we have six bachelor's and four master's degrees. My father worked for the MTA but knew the value of an education. My mother graduated from Harlem Hospital School of Nursing and worked as a school nurse.

I STUDIED PHYSICS AND MATH, WORKED AS A STOCKBROKER—DIDN'T LIKE THAT—THEN WENT TO WORK IN A RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPE LAB, ANALYZING EVERYTHING FROM MUMMIES TO THE MILK USED BY HERSHEY'S.

In a chemical accident, I encountered fuming nitric acid and radioactive waste. After that, I got really interested in safety. After a couple of pit stops, I ended up at Brooklyn College and then Hostos. Best move that I've made career-wise. Very rewarding.



DIAHANN McFARLANE

STAFF
I AM HOSTOS



JEANETTE MIRANDA / STAFF

CUNY OFFICE ASSISTANT,
OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS;
ADJUNCT LECTURER, HUMANITIES

I am staff, alumna and an adjunct. At 19, I was a news anchor on Channel 9 Color Visión in Santo Domingo. Then I had my son, and he changed my life.

My sister told me to come here. My father had graduated from Hostos. At Hostos I received support. I decided to come here and face a new life where I did not know what to expect.

WHEN I WAS NEW HERE, HOSTOS WAS MY HOUSE, MY CONTACT WITH PEOPLE, MY ROLE MODEL AS A MOTHER OF AN EIGHT-MONTH-OLD CHILD, AS A CITIZEN, AND AS A STUDENT.

I still live in the same place on the Concourse, been coming these few blocks ever since. Last year, I was the news director at a Spanish language radio station, Quisqueya, here in the Bronx. Things happen unexpectedly; events change your life. My son is grown up, attended St. John's. He's a rapper. He writes. I brought all my dreams with me. If I met someone like me here today, I would tell them, create yourself.



JEANETTE MIRANDA

STAFF I AM HOSTOS



NELIDA PASTORIZA / STAFF
REGISTRAR

When I came to Hostos in 1975 there was only one room. It was always a very bright place. There was the famous Combo Room where we always gathered.

In the Save Hostos campaign, everyone gave two dollars, whatever they had. Angela Davis was here; Herman Badillo, the first Puerto Rican U.S. congressman. Everyone had a role to play in the struggle, even the so-called opposition. Everyone wanted to make sure Hostos survived. The Vietnam Veterans' Club, Juisa, the Puerto Rican and Black Student Union were all strong. Ramón Jiménez, a professor who lost his job in the movement, was on the cover of the *New York Post* in handcuffs.

We had a blind president, Mr. Santiago. Talk about diversity and inclusiveness; no one said he can't do this. We used to have registration open until 1:00 and 2:00 in the morning. Nelson Torres came to complain about discrimination, and I offered him a job.

There is something about Hostos.
**THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH
A LOT OF HEART WHO WANT TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.** Hard work
made that possible.



NELIDA PASTORIZA

STAFF
I AM HOSTOS



VICTOR SANTANA / STAFF

IT ASSISTANT,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

When I first came to New York in 1989, I was trying to continue my education, looking for a place, and Hostos gave me an opportunity. I was helped during registration, treated like family. That was in the fall. By the following spring, I was helping other students.

We rented a second floor in Hunt's Point, my wife and my first son. We have five children now. I worked in the Marriott cafeteria in the World Financial Center from 5:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., then caught the subway straight to work for a couple of hours in Student Aid before classes from 5:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. My brother and I were the first in my family to attend college. Now I work in the president's office.

My children are 23, 14, 13, 11 and 6. My oldest son graduated from Lincoln Academy here at Hostos and now attends Bronx Community College.

We pass it on. Our children learn from us, going to work, studying. It gets in their memory and they follow.



VICTOR SANTANA

STAFF I AM HOSTOS

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If you would like to support our students, please visit:
<http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/oia/givetohostos.html>

45 VOICES
**CELEBRATING
45 YEARS**

I AM HOSTOS

