



HONOR ROLL: ACAD Carpentry Instructor Marshall Janifer (center) is honored by ACAD Director Shelly Karriem and Miller & Long Chairman John McMahon.

CHANGING LIVES

The accolades came from those who know him best. John McMahon, chairman of Miller & Long Construction, called him a selfless inspiration who “has touched so many lives” and is the “glue” to the Academy of Construction and Design at Cardozo (ACAD) program.

By **Arnesa A. Howell**

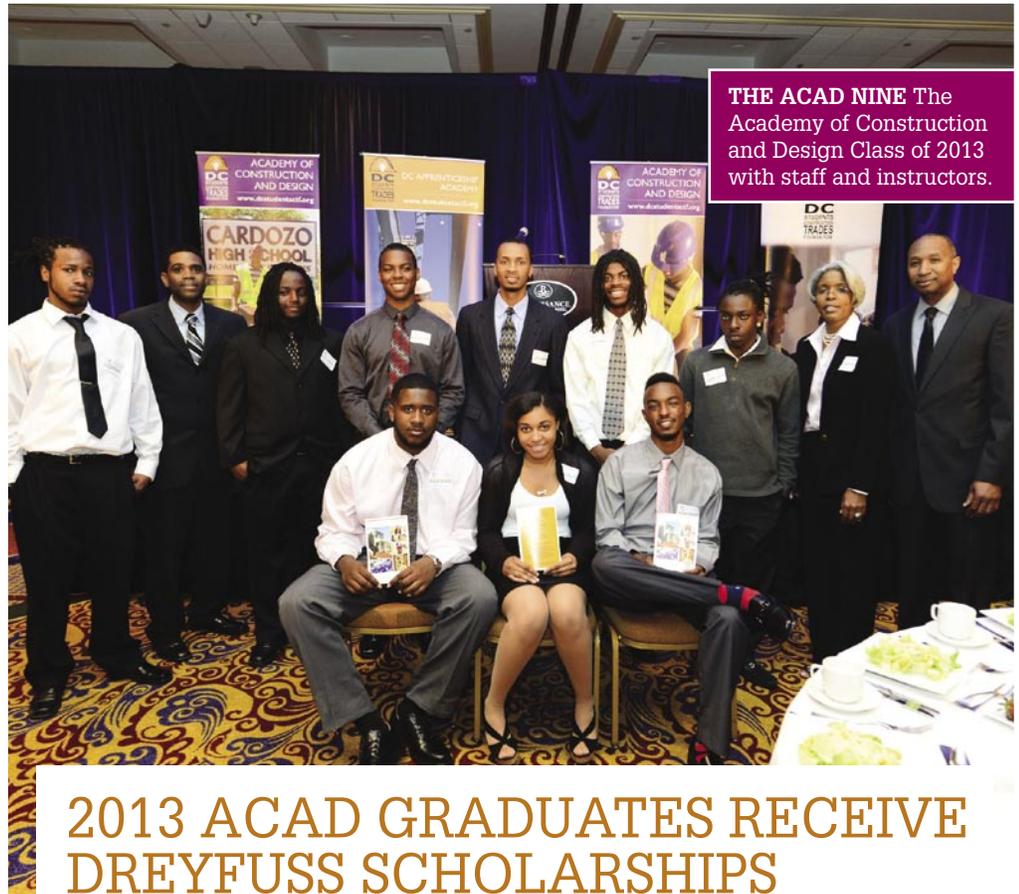
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MAKING STRIDES: JOB COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS



While raising awareness of workforce challenges and potential barriers to employment, the JOBS Coalition and its members have combined their resources and industry expertise to achieve the following results:

- Built the Bellevue Resource Center, a program facility serving the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ, and returning ex-offender populations. The Center was completed on September 30, 2003.
- Guided the creation of the Construction & Design Academy at Cardozo, providing District students access, training, and preparation for careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation. The Academy officially opened in September 2005. □



THE ACAD NINE The Academy of Construction and Design Class of 2013 with staff and instructors.

2013 ACAD GRADUATES RECEIVE DREYFUSS SCHOLARSHIPS

Inspiring. Triumphant. Elated. These were among the words describing the graduates and emotions surrounding the 7th Annual Meet the Future Luncheon, where nine students of the Academy of Construction and Design (ACAD) at Cardozo stepped across the stage as the Class of 2013.

By **Arnesa A. Howell**

“This is a celebration today,” said Jim Kinkead, luncheon chairman and senior vice president of Clark Construction, in his opening remarks.

While the luncheon celebrated the accomplishments of all the graduates, three grads received extra special recognition: Dreyfuss Scholarships. The scholarships are named after Norman Dreyfuss, executive vice president and chief operating officer of IDI Group and D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation Executive Council member, and they honor Academy of Construction and Design students with monetary awards to help them realize their college or career aspirations after high school graduation. So far, more than \$23,000 in scholarships have been awarded to ACAD students.

Girls Rock

This year, the top honor and a \$4,000 award went to Thelma Leggett, 18, and the only female in the carpentry program. “It’s a start

for my future – me going to college and making a difference,” Leggett, who plans to attend Shaw University in North Carolina, told *JOB COALITION PATHWAYS*.

She added that being part of ACAD has been a life-changing experience. “In the beginning when I first got to Cardozo, I started off really bad,” Leggett said, adding that ACAD Director Shelly Karriem told her that getting into and staying in the Academy could help make her dreams come true. As she readies for college, Leggett is planning to put her art and construction skills to good use in architectural design.

Giving Accolades

Meanwhile, second-place Dreyfuss Scholarship winner Kendrick Lewis received a \$3,000 award. Lewis, the first high school student apprentice with ACAD, plans to pursue a career in the construction industry. “This Academy has shown me that preparing the mind for

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Janifer Bonus *Continued from page 1*
 And Shelly Karriem, director of ACAD, lauded him for being “the wind beneath the wings of the Academy of Construction and Design.”

In May, at the annual Meet the Future awards luncheon, lead carpentry instructor Marshall Janifer was honored for his years of dedication to his craft and the students whose lives he’s helped to shape. As part of this special recognition, McMahon – president of the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation (DCSCTF) – presented Janifer with a bonus check of \$10,000 on behalf of DCSCTF.

“He has been the father to so many fatherless young people,” said Karriem, who praised him as a friend and confidant who’s been with the Academy from the beginning. In a video tribute to the instructor, Karriem said it’s not unusual to find Janifer working late at night or on Saturdays on community service projects, and even teaching evening classes for the apprenticeship program, which provides advanced training for adults already working in the trades. He guides and mentors ACAD students, and has even driven students – who have had no other means of transportation – off to college in his van. Also, he was acknowledged for making math “come alive” in a practical way for those having trouble.

“I try to prepare them for when they get out of the cozy environment of the school setting to that real world setting,” Janifer said in taped remarks about the students he teaches at ACAD. “We talk about real world issues along with carpentry.”

Giving Thanks

“I truly thank everyone for this honor,” said Janifer, who was raised and educated in Washington, D.C. and began his career as a teacher after graduating from Virginia State University.

But it’s the thanks he receives from students that drives him. Janifer later told *JOBS Coalition Pathways*: “When one, two come back and say, ‘thank you’ – and a lot of them have – it makes it all worthwhile.”

In accepting the honor, an overwhelmed Janifer stood alongside family, including his twin sons. Not one for the spotlight, he shared the praise showered upon him with the fellow educators in the room.

“I don’t do anything [more than] some of these teachers out here in the audience do – they do the same thing,” a modest Janifer said. “They go that extra mile.”

He continued, “I really appreciate folks honoring me for just the little part that I do. To the kids that I’ve come in contact with, I love you. I was glad to be part of your life, and glad you were part of mine.”

It’s a sentiment shared by the young people whose lives he’s touched. Replied one student from her seat in the audience: “We love you, too.” □



STAR POWER (From left) First-place Dreyfuss Scholarship winner Thelma Leggett, IDI Group’s Norman Dreyfuss, Miller & Long’s John McMahon, second-place winner Kendrick Lewis, ACAD Director Shelly Karriem and third-place winner Ricky Williams.

MTF Luncheon *Continued from page 1*

working is just as important as learning the trade skills, because without the proper outlook toward the workforce, all the skills in the world would not impress an employer,” he said in a video presenting the finalists.

Like many graduates before him, Ricky Williams acknowledged the positive impact the Academy has had on his life. In taped remarks, he credited ACAD with helping him beat the odds. Without the Academy, he said, “I would probably be in the streets, just another statistic – a young black man who is doing nothing with [his] life or working a part-time job barely able to make it.”

“But because of the Academy, I know what career path I will take. And I thank the staff for not giving up on me, even when I had given up on myself,” added Williams, third-place winner of a \$2,000 scholarship.

The ceremony also included a special 2013 ACAD alumni scholarship presented by ACAD alums Kavara McDonald and Marie Ngo Mbock to student Landon Carver. The pair, members of the ACAD Alumni Association, recognized him for his “outstanding performance” at the Academy. “We recognize where the students are coming from because we were once them,” McDonald, manager of the apprenticeship training program, said. The scholarship stands at \$250 and is growing, she noted.



HAPPY DAY Thelma Leggett takes top honors in the Dreyfuss Scholarships.

Words of Wisdom

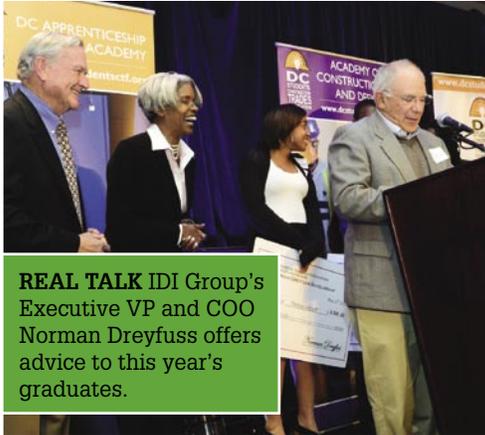
Also during the ceremony, Dreyfuss passed along sage words from friend and IDI Group’s President and CEO Giuseppe Cecchi. To the young people in the audience, he offered the following advice:

- Be honest, be fair.
- Always fulfill your promises. “Do not promise more than you can deliver. It is better to deliver more than you promise,” he said.
- Stay out of debt. “Do not spend more than you earn. If you cannot afford college, take a job for a few years, work hard and prove yourself. There are plenty of jobs that don’t require a college education. You can go to college later, even while you work,” he advised.
- Your first job doesn’t have to be your dream job. “Your first job is where you have the opportunity to establish yourself. Work hard, and you will succeed,” he explained.

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PAY IT FORWARD (From right) ACAD alums Kavara McDonald and Marie Ngo Mbock present a special alumni scholarship to Landon Carver.



REAL TALK IDI Group's Executive VP and COO Norman Dreyfuss offers advice to this year's graduates.

MTF Luncheon *Continued from page 2*

- Do not overreach. "It is better to start at a low level and go up as you prove yourself rather than to start too high and fail," he said.
- Try to learn as much as you can about all aspects of your job. "Only when you feel prepared and comfortable begin to consider starting your own business. Always

remember: Before you will be able to give direction to others, you need to follow direction yourself," he asserted.

While these words of wisdom focused on the current class, his next gesture was aimed at future classes. "I'd like to donate another \$10,000 to the scholarship award in his [Giuseppe Cecchi's] honor," announced Dreyfuss.

Together, Dreyfuss and others – including guest speaker Patrice Gaines (*see sidebar, right*) – applauded the latest graduates, who through ACAD have been shown the many roads to success. Now it's up to each one to set out on the path before them. For that journey, Dreyfuss offered this final thought: "To achieve success, perseverance and determination are more important than IQ." □

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MESSAGE OF HOPE
Award-winning journalist and author Patrice Gaines shares her life story.

KEEP THE FAITH

Patrice Gaines, a veteran journalist and author who overcame drug addiction and other life struggles, shared inspirational words with this year's ACAD graduating class. She chronicled her journey in a spoken word piece.

"I am a convicted felon – there is no period after that sentence," she told the audience, emphasizing that her life didn't stop there. Her pathway to prison included shooting heroin at 21, barely getting by in school and loving herself "not at all." A year after graduating from high school, she was pregnant. Mother and child wouldn't stay together – Gaines left her baby with grandma and traipsed behind her child's daddy to North Carolina, where more troubles followed. After her baby's father and his friend sold heroin to an undercover agent at a concert, she was caught with "drugs and syringes in my pocketbook." Gaines was charged with possession of heroin with intent to distribute. The experience would not be a lesson learned.

Eventually, she would seek out a job – no easy task with a record. She wrangled with herself whether to tell the truth or not. "One day a wrinkled faced white woman smiled at my truth and said, 'Erase your criminal record from this application and I'll give you a job.' I erased my record with a rubber tip, brushed the crumbs of it away from me and became a clerk/typist." A shared apartment with a girlfriend followed, and she was able to bring her daughter back home. Gaines recalled writing at night about being a convicted felon, being a mother and struggling to find a job.

She also continued to struggle with loving herself – a toxic relationship simultaneously drained her spirit and left her emotionally and physically battered. She gained the strength to go to the police, but he fled. "I

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Gaines Sidebar *Continued from page 3*
prayed that he would keep on fleeing, because I could not live through a trial; could not have people look at me and see nothing or see a convicted felon,” she said. “And police did not catch him, and I rejoiced a torturous victory.”

Again, she wrote about the life that she knew. Next, she found a job as a secretary at a Charlotte newspaper where she saw reporters writing for a living. A friend gave her information on a program at the University of California, Berkeley that would teach her to become a journalist – for free. “I heard free trip to California. I applied,” she said. Accepted into the program, she moved from reporting job to reporting job until landing at the Washington Post. It was there that her past would catch up with her.

“At the Washington Post, some of us report-

ers are preparing for a lawsuit. A lawyer asks me, ‘Is everything correct on your employment application?’ There is that question that always stumped me.”

She told her editor the truth before stumbling to the bathroom to hide her tears – life’s responsibilities weighing heavily on her mind before she eventually got an answer: “We have decided to keep you because you are so darn talented,” Gaines recalled her editor, Ben Bradlee, telling her. “They think I came there to be a reporter, you and I know I went there to find out who I am,” she stated matter-of-factly.

The message in her story: “Don’t live in the past. Your future is not there. Who you are today is not who you will be tomorrow. Who you were yesterday is not who you are today. And there is hope in that message.” –AAH □

JOBS COALITION PROMISES

- Provide opportunities for District residents to secure gainful employment.
- Remove barriers that prevent meaningful employment.
- Provide educational and training opportunities for all District residents interested in pursuing careers in various industries and trades.
- Work toward the creation of a comprehensive, fair, and more open system of training and hiring the underserved, unemployed, and returning ex-offenders.
- Ensure that the training and educational skills being taught are relevant to the job market of today and tomorrow.
- Engage elected and appointed officials to support legislation and maintain appropriate oversight to ensure gainful employment for District residents, including the underserved, unemployed, and returning ex-offenders.

JOBS COALITION MISSION STATEMENT

We will work together to develop a long-term strategy that creates an environment where aspiring District residents will have unprecedented opportunity to succeed. We strive to create a fair and open system, supported by government, industry, employers and the education and faith-based communities, which seeks to properly train today’s apprentices while making an unparalleled commitment to educating students and others not yet in the workforce.

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