



THE PAPER

REFLECTIONS

THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK - THE PAPER ALUMNI GROUP



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- Bob Collazo, '71

CCNY – A Brief Reminiscence

City College in my mind's youthful innocent eye was a gleaming citadel of intellectual pursuit high on a hill in upper Manhattan and an improbable neighbor to Sugar Hill. A high society of Black cultural nobility and intelligentsia that loomed adjacent to this architectural splendor of neo-Gothic structures marbled along Convent and St. Nicholas Ave in Hamilton Heights—35 acres of white privilege and preservation in Central Harlem right over the proverbial backyards of Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Thurgood Marshall, Willie Mays and Butterfly McQueen.

My Puerto Rican aunt once lived a stone's throw from Townsend Harris Hall on the Harlem side of Amsterdam Avenue and on occasional Sunday visits as a boy I got to witness—up close—the magnificence of Lewisohn Stadium and amphitheater which ranged for two city blocks between 136th and 138th Street along Amsterdam Avenue with its crest of Doric colonnades of imposing ancient vintage, that I surely knew must have once boasted chariot races and gladiatorial contests within. Actually, as I would later come to learn, you were more likely to witness the genius of Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald than Spartacus at one of Lewisohn's famous concert performances.

Still, back in the Fifties, my young cousins would excitedly offer me walking tours of the college grounds—such as they could—around North campus mostly, and I marveled—wide-eyed—at the imposing cathedrals of Shepard Hall, Townsend Harris, Wingate, Baskerville and Goethals Hall where I would later encounter Addison Gayle's headlong forays into Existentialism, Dostoyevsky, Saunders Redding, Richard Wright and Gayle's own contrarian take on Black aesthetics and other literary revelations. It was an enlightening excursion to say the least. Such academic experiences were an educational keystone for a working-class kid from the Bronx on an improbable life journey through this “poor man's Harvard.”

Great teachers like Addison Gayle, Toni Cade, and Barbara Christian established the foundation of a continuing interest in all things literary that bled over into an avid pursuit of history, Spanish literature, as well as for Puerto Rican studies, politics, music and journalism. One could not have cultivated a social or political consciousness worthy of the term without such committed individuals at City College at that time. And they were but a few of the remarkable teachers and supportive faculty that nurtured and encouraged excellence and intellectual curiosity. But the times, as Bob Dylan prophetically reminded his boomer generation “They were a changing.”

Campus upheavals that interrupted all that academic reverie were no stranger to City College at this volatile time.

The school mirrored the unrest and courageous student resistance wracking American universities from Harvard Square to UC Berkeley, as events both at home and in Southeast Asia echoed and tumbled out of control for government, and military policy makers scrambling to keep pace with the shifting sands of political events. These were events compounded by strident outcries for social and racial justice, and Civil Rights reforms from every quarter, Central Harlem primary among them—demands that could no longer be put off.

Both national political parties faltered in the bargain. Tragically, the Kennedy Administration could only mutely witness its ambitious if incomplete agenda inherited by a willing but flawed successor in LBJ who doubled down on crippling foreign policy errors before yielding the field to a hard-right, Republican Cold Warrior from the West in Richard Nixon who promised more than he could deliver.

Meanwhile the cancer of Southeast Asia had metastasized and the body count continued to bloat, as did the official duplicity in Saigon and Washington. American cities and university campuses called upon for additional military enlistments. Hometown America—facing a new draft lottery - braced for the worst. College kids rebelled. Selective Service cards burned and young Americans, who could, split for Canada in droves.

Meanwhile, as the Tet Offensive in 1968 would make clear, a national calamity was being played out nightly in living color on TV screens coast-to-coast between episodes of Lawrence Welk and Ed Sullivan variety show era programming.

The reckoning would eventually come but Watergate, which would serve at once as the death agony of the old order and a high watermark for the republic, was still in the offing.

If nothing else, the agonizing slow wind down of the war in Vietnam presaged a moment in time in this country that the time for half measures and cloakroom compromises was over. The country was bleeding, broke, and exhausted. American youth and academic, social and corporate institutions alike yearned to cauterize the nation's deep social and emotional fissures, and begin a national healing process.

But that was a few years off in 1971 and Campus editorial coverage and opinion columns at this time reflected a spectrum of diversity of opinion, dissent and radical political and social departure on all these critical matters. It was no different at Columbia's Morningside Heights campus, CUNY, or at City College.

Vocal student protests against ROTC and Dow Chemical recruiting, administration building take-overs, counter demonstrations, campus shut-downs, anti-war rallies, street demonstrations, NYPD counter mobilizations and student convocations galvanized American campus life and gave a special piquancy to the graffiti in the bathrooms in Finley Hall.

Reading the scribes I learned that this wasn't exactly ground breaking news at CCNY. I read on...

By the time SNCC, the Black Panthers, the FALN and Mark Rudd's Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) came riding in in the Sixties, the CCNY student body had had a long and boisterous history of political dissent, extending back decades to the volatile political and labor struggles of the thirties between Trotskyites and Stalinists. It was as if Irving Howe was looking over my shoulder.

The raging events of my day, however, played out to varying degrees on the ink stained pages of *The Campus*, the *Observation Post*, and *Tech News*, aka *The Paper*. North campus engineering students cleaved to their editorial ramparts of choice and liberal arts majors in turn championed theirs but they were all must reads. I kept pace with the spread of coverage just to see how other campus organizations viewed the world. Not that there was any one "correct" way to examine the issues; it was always a matter of context, emphasis and slant, but facts were facts after all. And you couldn't make those up.

The *Campus* was, in the generality, the establishment and oldest organ at the school and *OP* hewed left of that editorial focal point, which gave *The Paper*—the newest member of the group—a wide berth on the progressive plateau.

The Paper presented the issues of the day with a heightened perspective and diversity of staff that usually spoke to the widest interest and relevance of the newest campus arrivals, Black and Latino working class minority kids like me. And issues there were plenty.

At CCNY none was bigger than the pitched battle for Open Admissions and the proffering of the famous Five Demands by student activists who nailed it to the College Administration Building's proverbial wall and President Buell Gallagher's hide. That was the opening salvo. However, campus struggles around ethnic studies, curriculum changes reflecting linguistic criteria in the Romance Language Department for instance also loomed large.

Minority student demands for greater influence in campus governance and department personnel hires and off campus housing issues for SEEK students at the Alamac Dorms was another flash point. Of course on the national scene, Kent State, Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia, SDS activity on campus and the Weather Underground apocalypse at a West Village townhouse one fateful day in March of 1970 also dominated campus debate and coverage.

They were nothing if not pulse racing times to be at the center of such interesting times, as the Chinese would say, and covering breaking events at a campus newspaper like *The Paper* whose grungy South Campus offices in Finley Hall office were in active ferment from day to day and hour to hour to a soundtrack of Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* wafting in the background.

And the unseen guiding hand behind all of this tumult, marshaling his editorial troops and coverage was a mountain of a man of about 5'5" named Louis Rivera, *The Paper's* long-time editor and ubiquitous father figure.

Rivera in his day was nothing if not a reassuring presence at the helm of a hectic campus news operation, and who nurtured his young staff and operations deftly and with unflinching courage and energy. He likely had a cot back there somewhere as well, or so it seemed.

And if you were lucky, you were around when a phalanx of the NYPD's Tactical Police Force descended upon the City College Campus, Convent Avenue, and South Campus with the blessing of law and order mayoral candidate and City Comptroller, Mario Procaccino aiming to send a tough message to campus activists, and maybe if Managing Editor Joudon Ford wasn't around or News Editor Tom McDonald was home nursing a hangover—and everybody else was on another planet—maybe you got the assignment.

Similarly, you just might be shooting the breeze at the office one afternoon when Rivera plucked an item out of a stack of fresh press releases about a new film screening in midtown of a new thriller—a gritty account of cops, heroin and international conspiracy called "French Connection" and he dropped a lollipop in your lap: a few hundred words by way of a review if there was something there for the next edition.

Director William Friedkin and NYPD detective Sonny Grosso on whom the film was based were on hand at the conclusion of the film for an exclusive Q&A. Sweet.

Campus journalism in those halcyon days at the CCNY ramparts was a daily adrenalin rush, with a first-class education—both in the streets at *The Paper* and in the classroom—there for the taking in the capital of the world... and Central Harlem. Wouldn't have traded it for all the ivy in Harvard Yard.



“When I look back to my teenage self, committed to a professional rigor as instilled by my teachers, focused on reporting on her community, having worked and studied in two underdeveloped nations - I know that the person I am today is a result of my experiences at CCNY.”

**-Anne Doris, '75 (Journalism)
Professor, Penn State University**

My Reflections on CCNY

I was the fifth member of my family to attend The City College of New York. My major was Journalism, my minor—Black Studies.

The faculty of both those departments significantly influenced my life and career. Studying under writers and professors like Irving Rosenthal, Francine duPlessix-Gray and Richard Goldstein, I learned the importance of developing professional writing skills, finding and using my authentic voice to connect with and communicate to my audience.

As a student reporter for *The Paper*, I integrated my professors' journalistic influences with *The Paper's* focus on connecting to the issues facing our local, national and global communities.

A pivotal part of my time at CCNY was my participation in two separate work-study programs—one in South America, the other in East Africa, sponsored by the Black Studies Department. The two programs—led by Black Studies faculty members Margherita Matias, Alex Miller and Max Manigat—were factors in my winning a global role in the cable television and television industry. Studying and volunteering in different countries made me more aware of cultural differences and the ease of finding common ground through work, shared meals and local hospitality.

There were conversations between the US and African students that remain with me today. For example, one student expressed confusion about our ethnicity self-identifiers (Negro, Afro-American, Black) and feeling uncomfortable when using an old descriptor. Or exchanges about our shared heritage being expressed in music and dance. I learned that I could fit into any society by being open and engaging. This ability allowed me to live and work effectively in various US and global markets.

After a career spanning three decades in the cable television and telecom industries, I now teach Advanced Telecommunications Management & Leadership at Penn State University. Last year I had the opportunity to take my students to Guyana in South America. My students were amazed, and irretrievably changed by the experience, just as I was during the visit I took to the same country as a CCNY student 40 years ago. My students adapted quickly to Guyana's multi-cultural society. When visiting one of the indigenous villages, we had a discussion with a tribal leader and several young people. The leader, a woman, talked of preparing the young for the responsibility of their people's future. The discussion between our groups about using technology, yet safeguarding their ancestral life caused one of my students to comment on how much we could learn from them.

When I look back to my teenage self, committed to a professional rigor as instilled by my teachers, focused on reporting on her community, having worked and studied in two underdeveloped nations—I know that the person I am today is a result of my experiences at CCNY.

My wish is that the outstanding City College faculty continues to teach future graduates, that *The Paper* remains a voice of its diverse community, and that young people are being prepared for their roles in companies, communities and life. This is why I support CCNY, and *The Paper Scholarship for Social Justice*.



“This background led me to make my student home at The Paper, and probably explains why I felt more at home there than in the many groups in which I have participated since.”

-David Friedlander, '73

Reflections on The Paper

I was born in 1950 to refugees from Germany living in the Bronx. My early years were deeply affected by the aftermath of my family's entanglement in the deadly firestorms of 20th century Europe. World War I and its devastating aftermath, the Russian Revolution, the rise of Nazism, World War II, the London Blitz, the extermination of the Jews, the Yalta Conference, the “Jewish doctors’ plot”—each of these had a direct and personal effect on my family, and was experienced with intimate immediacy. I grew up in a very small nuclear family because the majority of the aunts, uncles, cousins and others—including my paternal grandmother—had been exterminated, and the few who remained were scattered around the globe.

I do not feel any nostalgia for the “Golden 50’s” of post-war prosperity, as I grew up in America during the Cold War. I recall, rather, the repression and narrowness of American society of the time, the fierce persecution of any struggle for a better world. I recall a horrific elementary school. Coming from a leftist background, I can still summon up the atmosphere of fear in my home, where my parents felt that they had seen this all before—in Germany. They expected a 4 AM knock on the door. I was haunted by the strange sensation that so many of my friends and neighbors didn’t know what war and racism really are, and what they can do about it.

This background led me to make my student home at The Paper, and probably explains why I felt more at home there than in the many groups in which I have participated since.

Since my graduation, I have worked in several fields. With a degree in music, I worked for a while as a music teacher, and taught ethnomusicology in the graduate studies program at Brown University. I then moved on to my first love, radical politics, and worked for a small radical newspaper for two years. None of these things put bread on the table, so I decided to get serious about making a living. I began a series of jobs working in the burgeoning technology field moving from typesetting to documentation to programming and systems work.

In 1987 I began consulting, and increasingly worked in the field of analytical, budgeting and forecasting systems. For eleven years I ran my own small services company, Vector Space Inc.; in November 2006—with Albert De Leon’s legal assistance—I sold it to another company and then worked for them part-time.

While juggling the occupational side, I was involved for many years in tenant organizing, serving as the president of my tenant association and for a while as a president of a street association. Under my leadership, we fought for affordable housing, and took part in other citywide struggles.

Twelve years ago, I was married and eventually fathered a wonderful son. The marriage did not survive but George has been my greatest blessing. Raising George and dealing with personal issues have more or less kept me “out of trouble,” but I continue to have a lively interest in public affairs and social issues.

While my ideas about the world have basically remained, fortune has guided me into domains I never envisioned visiting when I was a college student. I hope I have learned to judge a little less quickly, and to have a little more compassion for those whose paths are very different from my own.

I am currently evaluating what I will do in the next stage of this adventure called Life.

Editor’s Note: David wrote this essay in anticipation of the 2007 Paper Reunion. Tragically, David passed away in 2010 before he could find his next life adventures, and to see his son graduate from MIT.



“Buddy Miles sang, ‘We’ve got to live together.’ My Paper experience helped me to fight for justice while not seeing myself as a victim.”

- Joudon M. Ford, '73 (English)

CCNY – A Brief Reminiscence

My name is Joudon Ford and I am a former editor of *The Paper*. As an African-American, I suppose my beloved NYPD would characterize me as—“He’s Black. If he didn’t do this, he did something.” Hey, no hard feelings, guys.

When asked to record my recollections of the 1969 takeover, the only recollection I have was hearing about it over the cellblock radio at Rikers Island. I was locked up in pre-trial detention for attempted murder, of which I maintain my innocence to this day. DA Eugene Gold knew this, but went political—he got his years later when he was caught with his finger in the shorts of a ten-year old in Tennessee. After all, I was the senior Black Panther in NYC at the time, and as I said above, if I didn’t shoot at the two cops, I must have done something.

The reader will forgive me if I appear distracted. Spring of 1969 was jail time. Prior to my four months on the Rock, I spent a month in Federal Detention at West Street, the precursor “Graybar Hotel” prior to the building of the Metropolitan Correctional Center. My crimey Tyrone Smith and I were busted on the way to California for the joint funeral of Bunchy Carter and John Huggins, two Panthers gunned down in Los Angeles. We had the guns, but were not planning to hijack the plane.

After my Spring leave of absence, and having left the Party in July, I returned to City College in the Fall of 1969. Paul Simms recruited me for Tech News. I cherished the relationships I made at *The Paper*, and remember my singular contribution being the innovation of “News Briefs,” a low-grade Walter Winchell-type column of news clips and gossip. I was not in the class of my colleagues Paul Simms, Jane Tillman Irving, Louis Rivera, Francee Covington, Sekou Sundiata (a/k/a Bob Feaster), Tom McDonald, Jerry Mondesire, Jeff Morgan and Greg Holder. This list is not complete, and is not given in false humility. There were many titans on our staff, including my life-long friends Albert De Leon, David Friedlander and Ray Frost. (Let me not forget my future wife, Arlette Hecht). The wealth of intellect and character among those I knew at *Tech News/The Paper* underwrote all we did within the roughly 4 years I was at the newspaper.

One of the tragedies I recall was the failure of the New York State Board of Regents to provide the remediation required by Open Admissions. Students with a 65% GPA for high school were seldom ready for the rigors of an excellent school like City. Real tutoring would have enabled Black and Latino students to better benefit from proximity to our world-class faculty, like Howard Adelson of the History Dept. and Prof. Mintz of English, who taught me the grandeur of John Milton.

I was a firebrand when young, and wished I had been of a mind to counsel academic excellence and rigor, which I lacked, instead of an overly passionate mouth. My post-jail semester I had a 4.0 GPA. It went down somewhat from there. As a banking and financial professional, and later a teacher, I learned that our job would have been better done with less whining and more excellence, for which CCNY had always stood, and I am glad to say, continues to do. That excellence was typified in people at *The Paper* like Louis Rivera. I mourn for *The Paper* now being merely the African-American voice at City College. I benefited by my Black and Latino associations, as well as by knowing and loving the white David Friedlander, Tom McDonald, and H. Rex Lindsley. My newspaper years helped prepare me for my two years at Yale, and my business future.

Oh well, I’ll be dead soon, and the kids will write the history. But I hope my words will survive, and that the young will remember that we are stronger together than apart.

In closing, I will pass over the violent plans I had for the bid whilst playing Negroes in the Card Room on the third floor of Finley. The City College education was too great to squander. And yet, I know I need to chill. It is not for me to tell others how to live. Buddy Miles sang, “We’ve got to live together.” My Paper experience helped me to fight for justice while not seeing myself as a victim.

As Bobby Seale (Chairman of the Black Panther Party) used to say, “You’re either part of the problem or part of the solution.” I hope my life will be found to have been part of the latter.

Peace Out!



“I came of age at CCNY and experienced an awakening that has affected and informed the rest of my life. The above is the story of the catalyst leading to that awakening - the day Martin Luther King was shot. It is not only my story, but also a landscape of the times and the period in which we lived.”

Dorothy Randall Gray, '71

Reflections: The Prince of Peace

“Martin Luther King is dead!” The word spread through City College’s Finley Auditorium like a whispered wave. It just couldn’t be true. We knew how rumor, smear tactics, and innuendo had already damaged political movements in these revolutionary days.

These were Cointelpro (the FBI’s Counterintelligence Program), Malcolm X, Black Panthers, Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Seale, and Fred Hampton days. These were Angela Davis and Kathleen Cleaver on posters, and Stokely Carmichael married to Miriam Makeba days.

These were big Afro, college takeover, protests, ‘Power to the people,’ fists in the air, riots in the cities, sit-in, be-in, love-in days. These were the days of Imamu Baraka and Don L. Lee; of Gylan Kain, David Nelson and Felipe Luciano giving rise to the Last Poets.

These were the days of Jimi Hendrix, Richie Havens, Buddy Miles, the Chambers Brothers, The Fugs, The Blues Project, Janis Joplin, and Slugs in the Far East. These were Charles Theater on Avenue B, The East, Big Black, folded arms, Black clothing and dark sunglasses days. This was not the day to kill the Prince of Peace.

Onstage, a fleshy middle-aged Black woman in sequins kicked her legs high to a Scott Joplin tune. The ragtime band struck up a joyful fanfare. A Black man in a white beard and Uncle Sam costume cake walked onto the stage waving an American flag and a piano grin.

Something acidic burned at the insides of my stomach. Anger gripped my heart with red, familiar fists. I could feel its color in the people sitting next to me. Finally, a shaken master of ceremonies came onstage to announce what some had not yet heard. “Ladies and gentlemen, I am very sorry to announce that Martin Luther King was shot and killed this evening. We are now going to continue the show in his honor.”

The band resumed playing. The music had gone from merry to macabre. The Uncle Sam Black man began to dance again. Stunned faces, anguish, horror and disbelief stared at this minstrel spectacle. A collective rage poured over the students like thick Alaga syrup. My entire body stiffened. A voice I did not recognize as my own stood up and yelled. “Stop the show! Stop the goddamn show!”

I had always been the proverbial good girl—passive, obedient, always wearing clean underwear in case “I got hit by a truck.” Something else was burning inside of me now. Something inside was breaking apart like ice floes. Another voice sounded, another awareness of what it meant to be Black in America. I felt another self-stepping out of the Dorothy I thought I knew, as if a Body Snatchers pod had been placed beside me.

“Dorothy Lovechild,” as some had called me, the girl in pigtails with pressed hair, a daisy behind her ear, and a ‘V’ sign for ‘peace and love. Dorothy, who believed passive resistance, would liberate us, that we could love our enemies into submission. Dorothy, who didn’t walk down one flight of stairs to hear Malcolm X because she believed he preached hatred and violence;

Dorothy, who avoided sun-glassed revolutionaries who preached the overthrow of a system they said, would never give Black people what they were entitled to.

I left Dorothy lying in the pod and began to scream, “No! No!”

We broke. Students stood up shouting, crying, banging their chairs. We marched out of the auditorium and through the halls chanting the only mantra we knew—“Martin Luther King! Martin Luther King! Martin Luther King!”

Dozens followed behind us. We threw open office doors and classroom doors and chanted as startled students and faculty watched the harmony of our fury.

“Shut it down!”

The Black students needed no further words. They threw on their coats, grabbed their education and joined us. Salted anger rolled down the faces pouring out of campus buildings, bitterness on their tongues, fists punching the night air. We gathered on Convent Avenue and marched against the traffic. Cars backed up and got out of our way.

“Martin Luther King! Martin Luther King!”

The news spread on the drum. People peered out of their windows at the hundreds of students massed on the avenue. They came running out of their buildings – women and men crying openly, coats and hasty scarves flying in the crisp spring air. We moved downhill, downtown. We were sure our linked arms and collective pain were stronger than the barricade of flashing police cars stretched across the street ahead of us.

Police insisted we march across 126th S Street instead of the main artery of 125th Street. But we wanted to stomp our feet on the spinal cord of Harlem.

We wanted to fill the wide boulevard with young voices grown older that night. The incensed crowd thickened its determination.

“Off the pigs! Power to the people!”

The police braced themselves with bullhorns, billy clubs and fingers poised on the triggers of their service revolvers. My heart pumped with anticipation. I heard the good girl yelling, “Fuck you! You can’t tell us what to do!” We tossed our defiant hymn like a hand grenade and pushed past them shouting, “Martin Luther King, Martin Luther King!” The police parted like the Red Sea.

Harlem was Club Baron, Mister B’s Big Wilt’s Smalls Paradise, Baby Grand, the Alhambra Theater, and Reclamation Site Number One protesting the state office building. It was Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni, Jayne Cortez, and Toni Cade Bambara reading poetry in the back of Liberty House.

Harlem was the East Wind, Oscar Michaud, Dr. Moore, Kanya and the Tree of Life, University on the Corner of Lenox Avenue called UCLA. It was the National Black Theater, Barbara Ann Teer, La Famile, the MJ Diner, and Wells chicken and waffles. But this night Harlem was on fire and we were in the middle of a riot.

Storefront windows crashed to the sidewalk. Huge shards of glass fell like bombs. Smoke poured out of stores and onto people running on either side of us, arms filled with whatever they could grab. People screamed and sirens cried. Garbage cans were tossed; alarms went off! Mayor Lindsay rose from the subway like a Greek god.

We continued to march, stepping over cracked glass and broken dreams. The streets were littered with rubble and rage. This was an anger, ancient and rampant. This was a day for the death of illusion. This was the day I traded the flower behind my ear for an Afro in my hair and I have never been the same.

I came of age at CCNY and experienced an awakening that has affected and informed the rest of my life. The above is the story of the catalyst leading to that awakening - the day Martin Luther King was shot. It is not only my story, but also a landscape of the times and the period in which we lived.



“Looking back on the beginnings of my career, one thing stands out: from *The Paper* to WCBS to the summer program, I was constantly surrounded by strong journalists who were committed to excellence and expected nothing less from me. It was quite a launching pad.”

Steven Holmes, '74 (Journalism)

My Reflections on CCNY and the Paper: How I Came to Journalism

I don't remember much about the moment that changed my life except that it was a sunny and warm autumn day.

I was sitting on a bench in the courtyard of the North Campus thumbing through the Fall semester course catalog. I was having somewhat of a hard time finding an elective to give me enough credits to maintain my status as a full-time student. The problem wasn't subject matter; it was finding a class that fit into my routine.

As a student who worked full-time, I had developed a schedule. I took classes in the morning. I then took the bus across the river to the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. I had lunch at my favorite hole-in-the wall restaurant (I don't remember the name, but I recall it made a great pot roast.). I then spent a couple of hours studying in the library at Hostos Community College, before walking over to my garage near 140th St. and Third Avenue, to pick up my taxicab and go to work.

So, the elective I needed had to meet in the morning.

At some point, my eyes fell on an intriguing possibility: “Principles of Journalism,” was the name of the course. That sounded interesting. As a political science major, I kept up with the news. I read the New York Times every morning as I rode the subway to school, and the New York Post – then an evening paper—as I traveled to my garage in the South Bronx. I especially loved the tough, but compassionate writing of several of the Post's columnists such as Jimmy Breslin, Pete Hamill and Jose Torres.

Best of all, the class met at 10 am: Perfect. What was also perfect was the instructor: Professor Irving Rosenthal.

In many ways, Prof. Rosenthal was the epitome of a college academic—tweed jackets, horned-rimmed glass, a ubiquitous pipe. He was also kind, thoughtful and encouraging. He was known for having mentored and helped develop renowned journalists, including A.M Rosenthal (no relation) who would become the Executive Editor of the New York Times, and Marvin Kalb, the legendary State Department correspondent for CBS News.

One day, after I had handed in a few writing assignments, Prof. Rosenthal asked me to stick around after class. He told me that he thought I had some writing ability and had I ever considered a career in journalism? When I told him I had not, his basic answer was, “well, you should.”

Prof. Rosenthal suggested that I should first start writing for *The Paper*, one of City's student newspapers. My busy class and work schedule didn't allow me the time to join *The Paper's* staff. But the newspaper's editors said they would be glad to accept occasional pieces from me.

I wrote a few, experiencing the pressure of writing on deadline, the ego-deflation of tough editing and the thrill of seeing my byline on the newsprint.

However Prof. Rosenthal's plans went beyond encouraging me to write for *The Paper*. He used his contacts to get me a job as a “desk assistant,” basically a copy boy/go-fer— at WCBS-TV News. Working at “Channel 2 News” meant I was surrounded

by, possibly the best and most professional group of journalists to ever staff a local news station, including Chris Borgen, Lynn Sherr, Ralph Penza, Vic Miles, John Stossel, J.J. Gonzalez and an attractive, young cub reporter named Maureen Bunyan. And that was just the on-air people. The station was loaded with talented writers, producers, assignment editors and graphics editors.

Working at Channel 2 wasn't just an opportunity to learn from some of the best. It also led to the next opportunity for me. One day, J.J. Gonzalez asked me what I planned to do after graduation. When I said I wasn't sure, he suggested I apply to a program that specialized in training minority journalists.

The Michelle Clark Memorial program, which was housed at Columbia School of Journalism, was legendary. It later moved to the University of California at Berkeley and was renamed The Summer Program for Minority Journalists and, later the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education. It has produced a plethora of well-known journalists. Among its graduates are Kevin Merida, now Executive Editor of the Los Angeles Times, Milton Coleman, former Deputy Managing Editor of the Washington Post, Mireya Navarro, formerly of the New York Times, and, yes, Geraldo Rivera.

Under the instruction of such people as Bob Maynard, who later went on to be the first Black owner of a major American newspaper, the Oakland Tribune, John Dotson, who later became the publisher of the Boulder Camera and the Akron Beacon-Journal, and Leroy Aarons, a wonderful editor and teacher, and who would later found the National Gay and Lesbian Journalists Association.

Looking back on the beginnings of my career, one thing stands out: from *The Paper* to WCBS to the summer program, I was constantly surrounded by strong journalists who were committed to excellence and expected nothing less from me. It was quite a launching pad.

Once I got started, I always seemed to be on the move. I worked a few years as a police reporter in Yonkers, N.Y. I moved to Dallas, Texas where I worked for the wire service United Press International. The Atlanta Constitution then hired me as their City Hall reporter. After a short period there, Time Magazine recruited me as a general assignment correspondent in their Chicago, Los Angeles, London and Washington bureaus.

After 10 years at Time, I was hired away by The New York Times where I covered Congress, the State Department, presidential campaigns and race and demographics. I had a short stint with the Washington Post as a deputy national editor. Finally, for the last 11 years, I was a standards editor in CNN's Washington Bureau, until my retirement.

It's been a whirlwind. Journalism has taken me to Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and 49 of the 50 states. I've seen the inside of Buckingham Palace, interviewed Nelson Mandela, covered an Olympic Games, reported on natural disasters and airplane crashes, flown aboard Air Force One, and spent the night in an Inuit village in the dead of winter on Alaska's Bering Sea coast.

It's been a rich, rewarding and exciting life. And I owe it all to the fact that Prof. Rosenthal's class took place at 10 a.m. If it had been 2 p.m., Lord knows where I would have ended up.

I am currently working on my first novel.



“While The Paper may be a distant memory and the long hours we spent in its office might run and overlap each other enough to add to the fog of that era, the one thing I can assert is the sense of importance it played in the jewel necklace that is my life. It had to be to help me to be, and for that, I am forever grateful.”

- Chris Newton, '72

Reflections

“Reflections” is an interesting way of attempting to recall past events that have somehow become part of a dreamscape. In my mind, there’s this image of small mirrors hovering amongst clouds, and somehow by passing by them and taking a look, memories are supposed to be triggered.

I honestly don’t know if I can remember specifics, there seems to be more of a flavor-in-feeling that comes to the senses when traveling to that time. I was a young man dating a beautiful young woman, Dorothy Randall, at the time. She was then currently involved in the takeover of Tech News with several other students. She asked me if I would mind drawing some editorial cartoons for a new paper. I agreed, and with that agreement, I was introduced to a whole ‘nother world of responsibility.

She introduced me to Louis Reyes Rivera during the changing of the guard, Tech News staff going out, *The Paper* staff coming in, with some Tech News staff willing to stay on. Louis had a unique way of making one feel part of something. I remembered him from the South Gate entrance during the 1969 Takeover (which of course I’m unable to remember which came first)—something about the smell of pizza we brought the folks, I was part of the cleaning detail, making sure Finley Student Center stayed clean.

I didn’t have much of a role in that; I was a quiet kid and any views I held about anything political or otherwise remained close to the vest. Still, there was something unique and special about the folks at *The Paper*. All of them had something I had; at the core, we were born workaholics who seamlessly became part of a one-minded organism. I discovered my tribe, and at the time it wasn’t about the level of importance of what we were doing, it was about doing it. If anyone had asked me why I was involved, I might not have had an answer. It became a need. It became a family, if only for that brief moment in time. A great nesting place for fellowship where I would play my guitar, talk politics or indulge in a good chess game after we took care of the important matters for *The Paper*.

I graduated from political cartoonist to layout editor, making it my business to get up early on those Saturdays when *The Paper* was going to press. Again the smell of bagels and hot coffee as some of us arrived in the early morning at the Boro print shop on 19th Street in Chelsea. We were there to proof articles, shorten articles, lengthen articles, rearrange them, all while the lead typists worked their magic to keep up with the changes. We were busy doing; there was nothing about work, nothing about pay, just a sense of accomplishment.

I enjoyed telling my parents I had to go downtown to get *The Paper* out. Something I’m glad to have passed on to my kids; my oldest daughter, who was involved in the takeover of a paper at Lehman College in the Bronx, which both my sons came to be part of when they attended Lehman. She’s now a teacher; my oldest son is a graphic artist director at the Bronx 12 News TV station and my youngest son a graphic director at Mercy College Bronx Net Cable.

I’m still the quiet, introverted guy who keeps things close to the vest, when I think back to that time, that age, that period there’s a romantic feeling of adventure or daring that wasn’t commonplace in my life at the time. I met some beautiful people with a magic of their own. Louis convinced me to write one article on the Schomburg Library; I told him I was uncomfortable with the assignment because I wasn’t a writer; he told me I was.

Years later after writing poetry, over five-hundred songs and then having to deal with my recovery after two strokes redesigned my life and my goals, I realized that I've been writing in some form for the last 40+ years. So I started doing so on a regular basis. Now I have three books out: "The Promise" (a poem of the promise our ancestors made to one another during our enslavement), "The Amurati" (50 short stories, 300 words or less), and a science fiction novel "The Seed (Origin of AI)," all on Amazon.com under my pseudonym, Amurà Oñāā. (Amura Onaa on Amazon). I continue to invent board games, and am currently finishing up two new books, and I'm co-writing another: www.amuraunlimited.com

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Thanks for allowing me to offer my reflections,

Chris Newton (aka Amurà Oñāā), 1972



Photos taken from
2007's The Paper
reunion.





The City College
of New York