Hidden Joys of Queens Revealed at Luncheon

Are you interested in discovering new places to visit in one of the boroughs that St. John’s University calls home? If so, you are in luck.

Joe DiStefano is the author of the popular book, 111 Places in Queens That You Must Not Miss. He will be the keynote speaker at the Annual Retirees Association Luncheon on November 14 at 1 p.m. in the D’Angelo Center Ballroom on the Queens, NY, campus.

This interesting and engaging author will share stories and excerpts from his book that highlight the many unique places found throughout Queens. Some of these hidden gems include jazz icon Louis Armstrong’s house in Corona and The Geekery HQ, a gaming shop in Astoria. Gantry Plaza State Park in Long Island City and the Beach 97th Street Concessions at Rockaway Beach are also featured.

This is not the author’s first visit to St. John’s. He was a popular speaker during the University’s Grand Alumni Homecoming Weekend in June.

As former St. John’s employees, our retirees are no strangers to the “World’s Borough.” Mr. DiStefano’s book will enhance their knowledge with a history of Queens, engaging images, meticulous descriptions, insider tips, and restaurant recommendations.

“As a longtime lover of Queens, I thought I knew about it before I began this project,” he remarked, “but I learned even more through my research.” A resident of Rego Park, Mr. DiStefano is known for his reviews of local food establishments.

For more information, and to RSVP, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 718-990-6232; alumni@stjohns.edu.
Office of the Provost
Enhancing the Teaching and Learning Environment at St. John’s
By Simon G. Mallier, Ph.D., Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

When many of us think back to our high school and college days, we may remember stuffy auditoriums with a lone podium and a single wall of chalkboards. We may also recall when the first personal computers and mobile phones were launched, let alone iPads and smart phones. Higher education is changing at an accelerated pace, and there is a steady stream of innovations in the science and technology of learning. Today, most college students have access to a range of different technologies, which they utilized during their high school years and expect to use during their college career. At St. John’s, we continue to enhance our teaching and learning environment to ensure that our students not only have access to advanced educational technology but that the technology is used to increase student engagement.

Most classrooms at St. John’s have been upgraded with a range of advanced podium tools, allowing the use of web-based applications and lecture capture, to mention only a few. The University also continues to upgrade teaching and research laboratories so that students have access to the latest research infrastructure. A great example illustrating this is the new Media Arts and Design Lab, which supports academic programs in digital media, animation, art and design, advertising, and journalism. Another example is the new Technology Commons, a high-tech space that focuses on eSports, virtual reality technology, and 3D printing. The integration of cutting-edge technology in the classroom will undoubtedly contribute to the success of our students.

As we enhance our teaching and learning environment, the University continues to recognize that exceptional faculty ultimately ensure the success of our students. Since fall of 2014, the University has hired 182 new faculty members and plans to hire 38 more this coming year. Having exceptional faculty and using cutting-edge technology in the classroom is a recipe for student success.

Office of Community Relations
St. John’s University in the Community
By Joseph Scialle ’71Ed, Vice President for Community Relations

The Office of Community Relations earned the Platinum Award at the New York Blood Center’s annual Queens Chairpersons Recognition Dinner for its donation of more than 600 pints of blood. In the true Vincentian tradition of giving of oneself, these donations represent more than 1,800 lives that were saved.

St. John’s was also recognized by the Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D., Bishop of Brooklyn, NY, for making significant donations during the Diocese of Brooklyn’s 2016 Blood Drive Campaign. The University earned the “College with the Most Donations” award.

In August, the University hosted its 20th Annual Summer Concert, “A Midsummer’s Enchanted Evening,” featuring the Queens Symphony Orchestra, led by Martin Majkut, Queens Symphony Orchestra’s Music Director, with special guest tenor Christopher Macchio. With nearly 1,000 people in attendance, it was a truly memorable evening.

St. John’s University once again participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk on Sunday, October 21, in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park. The following day, the University hosted the Queens Borough President’s Salute to Italian Heritage. In November, we honor our nation’s veterans with ceremonies on the Queens campus on Thursday, November 8, and on the Staten Island campus on Friday, November 9.

For more information about the Office of Community Relations, please contact Paul Lazauskas, Associate Director for Community Relations, at 718-990-1941; lazauska@stjohns.edu.

St. John’s was also recognized by the Diocese of Brooklyn for its donation of more than 600 pints of blood. In the true Vincentian tradition of giving of oneself, these donations represent more than 1,800 lives that were saved.

St. John’s was also recognized by the Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D., Bishop of Brooklyn, NY, for making significant donations during the Diocese of Brooklyn’s 2016 Blood Drive Campaign. The University earned the “College with the Most Donations” award.

Office of Human Resources
Open Enrollment for Retirees
By Miriam Cepeda, Senior Benefits Representative
Employee Benefits

This year the Open Enrollment period for retirees runs from October 29 through November 25, 2018. As long as you are currently enrolled in medical, dental, and/or life insurance you can make changes to your existing coverage or elect to enroll in new coverage. Elections made during the Open Enrollment period will be effective January 1, 2019.

The medical plan offered to all retirees is the Oxford Freedom Premier Plan. This is a robust plan which offers in-and out-of-network coverage as well as prescription drug coverage. There are two dental plans to choose from—the Cigna Plan or the Aetna DMO Dental Plan. The cost of each plan will be provided to you in the Open Enrollment materials mailed to your home. Discovery Benefits, our retiree billing carrier, will adjust your bill for any changes you make. If you currently have automatic payments through Discovery Benefits, the amount of the deduction from your checking account will be adjusted to reflect the changes you made during Open Enrollment.

For more information about Open Enrollment or any of the plans offered to retirees, please contact Pattarin Devery at 718-990-6683; deverry@stjohns.edu.

Office of Campus Ministry
By Victoria R. Santangelo, Associate Vice President for University Ministry

Campus Ministry invites you to continue to live out the Catholic and Vincentian mission through opportunities of faith, service, social justice, and community. As a member of the St. John’s family, we hope to see you at any Mass, service activity, or lecture that fits your schedule. Please be assured of our continued prayers!

Campus Ministry Calendar
November 4 11 a.m. Mass of Remembrance
November 14 12:15 p.m. Retirees Association Mass
November 15 12:15 p.m. Miraculous Medal Novena
November 18 5:30 p.m. Bereavement Mass
December 1 5:30 p.m. Lessons and Carols

Become a member of The McCallen Society
By Joseph Scialle ’71Ed, Vice President for Community Relations

The McCallen Society offers our donors an exclusive role in our University’s exceptional past. Why not play a role in its future by joining The McCallen Society, a donor recognition group exclusively for alumni and friends who have included St. John’s in their estate plans? It is a great way to establish your legacy to support a college or program closest to your heart and expand your social circle by attending various McCallen Society events held throughout the year.

For more information about how you can become a member of The McCallen Society, please contact Susan M. Damiani ’97CBA, Director, Office of Gift Planning, at 718-990-7562; damanis@stjohns.edu.