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**January 19, 2022**

**LaGuardia Community College Foundation Receives \$1,090,000 From the  
Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation**

***On the College's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Grant Endows the Gardiner–Shenker Student Scholars Program at the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, Honors LaGuardia's Founding President Joseph Shenker and Robert David Lion Gardiner***

**—Inaugural Endowment Project to Explore Women in New York City Government—**

**LONG ISLAND CITY, NY**—The LaGuardia Community College Foundation today announced a major grant of \$1,090,000 from the [Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation](#). This grant endows the Robert D. L. Gardiner–Joseph Shenker Student Scholars Program, through which a cohort of LaGuardia Community College students are selected each year to collaborate with historians and researchers at the [LaGuardia and Wagner Archives](#), a repository of New York City history.

“This is the largest grant the College has ever received to endow a program at LaGuardia. Thanks to the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, for years to come LaGuardia students will have opportunities to learn from faculty and staff of the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, a distinctive program at LaGuardia. The Robert D. L. Gardiner–Joseph Shenker Student Scholars Program provides students with valuable experiential learning opportunities about historic preservation work, preparing them for careers as historians,” said [President Kenneth Adams](#). “This generous funding, on our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, brings us closer to [raising \\$15 million](#)—an amount we’ve targeted to significantly expand resources to help students whose lives have been upended by COVID-19.”

"The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation is delighted to support the innovative approach to historical studies used by the Robert D. L. Gardiner-Joseph Shenker Student Scholars. Selected students bring their individual field of study into a research topic the students themselves select. This program is a model not only for academic studies but also for community engagement," said Kathryn M. Curran, executive director of the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation.

The Gardiner–Shenker Student Scholars Program was founded in 2017 with a \$225,000 grant from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation. It is named in memory of Robert David Lion Gardiner and Joseph Shenker, who served as LaGuardia's founding president from 1970-1989. Both Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Shenker were passionate about New York history.

The scholars program supports experiential learning opportunities for LaGuardia students with the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. Under mentorship from LaGuardia faculty and staff, the Gardiner–Shenker Student Scholars conduct primary research with Archives collections and create original documentation of New York City. Each year culminates in student-produced exhibitions. Projects to date include The [\*Lavender Line: Coming Out in Queens\*](#), [\*Voices of Queensbridge: Stories from the Nation’s Largest Public Housing Development\*](#), [\*Documenting the City: Journalism Inspired by Edith Evans Asbury\*](#), and most recently, [\*Portraits of an Epicenter: NYC in Lockdown\*](#).

“The Gardiner-Shenker Student Scholars Program exemplifies how mentoring is the best form of teaching and is key to undergraduate learning. The result is often meaningful relationships that help students blossom and realize their potential,” said Richard Lieberman, Ph.D., director of the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. “Additionally, Archives collections will be enhanced with the unique perspectives of LaGuardia students who share their life experiences and views on our city.”

“With support from the Gardiner Foundation, LaGuardia students can access the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives and relate their own experiences directly to the story of New York. The work they create reflects and preserves their diverse perspectives and unique experiences for future scholars of New York City,” said Molly Rosner, Ph.D., director of education programs for the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives.

### **Students will Explore Women in New York City Government**

In the inaugural year of this endowment, students will work with [political science](#) professors Anja Vojvodic, Ph.D. and Nichole Shippen, Ph.D., and [commercial photography](#) professors Maureen Drennan and Lidiya Kan, on a project exploring Women in New York City Government. Through interviews and archival research, the students will investigate what it means to have women in leadership roles, set within the global fight for gender equity. The Archives' [City Council Collection](#) will serve as the basis for this research.

A historic period for women in New York City politics is currently underway. For the first time, the New York City Council has both a female majority (31 of 50 representatives are women) and a female Speaker (Adrienne Adams). And Eric Adams, New York City’s newly-inaugurated mayor, appointed five women as deputy mayors.

"The Women in Government Archival Project, made possible by the Gardiner-Shenker Student Scholars Program, allows students to take part in creating a living archive, one that captures a momentous occasion in New York City Council politics including the unprecedented election of women of color, most of whom are children of working-class immigrants," said Dr. Shippen. "Perhaps students will see people like themselves in office and consider running for public office one day."



Established in 1987, the [Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation](#) primarily supports the study of Long Island history. Robert David Lion Gardiner was, until his death in August 2005, the 16th Lord of the Manor of Gardiner’s Island, NY. The Gardiner family and their descendants have owned Gardiner’s Island since 1639, obtained as part of a royal grant from King Charles I of England. The Foundation is inspired by Robert David Lion Gardiner’s personal passion for New York history.

The [LaGuardia and Wagner Archives](#) chronicles the past 150 years of New York City history, with a growing focus on Queens and the outer boroughs. Housing more than two million documents, and with 100,000 photographs digitized and accessible on its website, the Archives serves students, scholars, journalists, policy makers, and exhibition planners. Collections include the records of the New York City Council and the New York City Housing Authority; explorations into Queens local history and LGBTQ activism in Queens; as well as the papers and personal mementos of Mayors Fiorello H. LaGuardia, William O’Dwyer, Robert F. Wagner, John V. Lindsay, Abraham D. Beame, Edward I. Koch, David Dinkins, and Rudolph Giuliani.

The [LaGuardia Community College Foundation](#) is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to raising and distributing funds for LaGuardia Community College students. Founded in 2003, more than 25,000 students to date have received support from the foundation in the form of scholarships, gap grants, emergency funds, technology resources, paid internships, and more. Ninety-five percent of funds raised go directly to meeting LaGuardia students’ most pressing needs. Outcomes show the impact of this support on students—foundation recipients are three times more likely to graduate than general students.

[LaGuardia Community College](#), located in Long Island City, Queens, educates thousands of New Yorkers annually through degree, certificate, and continuing education programs. Our guiding principle, Dare To Do More, reflects our belief in the transformative power of education—not just for individuals, but for our community and our country—creating pathways for achievement and safeguarding the middle class. LaGuardia is a national voice on behalf of community colleges, where half of all U.S. college students study. Part of the City University of New York (CUNY), the College reflects the legacy of our namesake, Fiorello H. LaGuardia, the former NYC mayor beloved for his championing the underserved. Since our doors opened in 1971, our programs regularly become national models for pushing boundaries to give people of all backgrounds access to a high quality, affordable college education. We invite you to join us in imagining what our students, our community, and our country can become.

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Photo of presentation of the first installment on the grant, December 20, 2021:

Left to right:

Molly Rosner, Director of Education Programs, LaGuardia and Wagner Archives

Stephen Petrus, Director of Public History Programs, LaGuardia and Wagner Archives

Kenneth Adams, President, LaGuardia Community College

Kathryn M. Curran, Executive Director, Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation