

# FINCH NEWS

November 2007

A Publication for Finch College Alumnae and Friends

Number 22

## 13th Annual Cosgrave Ceremony Salutes Legacy of Beloved Mentor

"She brought us back to life again," said Finch Alumnae President Cheryl YOUNG Deknatel in her opening remarks at the annual Cosgrave Awards dinner May 8, 2007, at the Cosmopolitan Club.

Cheryl was talking about Dr. Margaret Maxwell, beloved Finch professor, friend and mentor who died April 17, 2007. She was 93 years old but eternally young, curious and caring. Dr. Maxwell, who taught history and government at Finch from 1953 to 1975, had been the force and inspiration behind the rebirth of the Finch College Alumnae Association in 1993 and the founding of the Cosgrave Awards in 1995. (See Dr. Maxwell's obituary on page 4).

Margaret Maxwell was on the minds of all the nearly 100 guests who attended the May event honoring five Finch alumnae and one faculty member.

A beautiful floral arrangement sat beside a large framed photograph of Dr. Maxwell, who seemed to be watching over everything and everyone. Each of the alumnae honorees gave her own special tribute to Margaret, as she accepted her award, presented by Cheryl and Barbara Ziet Glickman, dinner chairman.

Honorees were: **Pamela DAMMANN Adams**, **Shea GORDON Festoff**, **Margaret STEIN Nakamura**, **Susan EMBREE Parker** and **Virginia WATTIKER Sheerin**; and **Dr. Charles Bahn**, psychology professor from 1960 to 1963.

"Dr. Maxwell pushed me through the doors of the New York Society Library and the New York Public Library,"



SAVE THE DATE

★★★ NOVEMBER 28 ★★★

6-8 pm

**A CAMEROON WORLD**  
Art and Artifacts from the  
Marshall & Caroline Mount Collection  
at Queensborough Community College Art Gallery

\$50 per person  
Tour the collection with the Mounts  
Invites will be mailed with travel instructions

said **Pamela Adams**. "It is in her honor and memory that I'm here tonight. She was my favorite teacher and mentor. The college's size and location was a magnet for outstanding students. But Finch was very forgiving to those of us who had less than stellar academic careers."

Pam, as she is known to her colleagues, spoke with humility because after receiving her B.A. in history from Finch she went on to earn a master's from Columbia University and later taught at Hampton University in Virginia, a historically black college. Reared in a family that



*Laton McCartney, Robert Adams, Nancy Maresco McCartney, Pamela DAMMANN Adams*

## Cosgrave Ceremony (continued)



*Shea GORDON Festoff with daughter Marasan and husband, Barry*

worked for social justice and equality, Pam continues those goals today in Boston, where she manages multiple volunteer projects.

Kansas City artist **Shea GORDON Festoff** said she wished Dr. Maxwell's book, *Narodniki Women*, could be made into a movie. Through her art, Shea strives to bring people together in mutual respect and in appreciation for the fragile planet we inhabit. For years she has painted the Dead Sea. Because its shape resembles an embryo, she believes it is a symbol of hope, life, peace and preservation for the world.

In a similar vein, Shea said she felt Dr. Maxwell's leadership in rejuvenating the Alumnae Association "saved Finch from becoming extinct."

Always seen at Finch events with a camera in her hand, **Margaret Nakamura** was in front of the lens this time. She was honored for her talents as an illustrator and designer of greeting cards, books, trade publications and gift items. To develop her skills she studied in Kyoto, Japan, where she met her husband, Hideaki Nakamura, design director for Mikasa, Inc.

One day she said she hopes to write and illustrate a



*Margaret STEIN Nakamura with her father Irving Stein (left), son, Jeremy Yuto, and husband, Hideaki Nakamura*



*Susan EMBREE Parker and her husband, Fred*

children's book based on long talks with Dr. Maxwell about her pioneer roots in Kansas and the history of her great-grandparents.

**Susan Parker** called Finch a "cultural and educational oyster," with pearls of opportunity to study art and music, "to say nothing of the Schrafft's cheesebread and Bemelman's Bar at the Carlyle Hotel".

Susan, vice president of the Finch Alumnae Association, had a 34-year career with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and is now with DHL Global Mail. And in the true spirit of a Cosgrave honoree, she also finds time for volunteer service.

"My thanks to Jessica Finch Cosgrave, who required all of us to go the extra mile, and to Dr. Maxwell, all my thanks. What a fascinating teacher she was. I hope she can hear my accolades."

Former Alumnae President **Virginia Sheerin** has excelled in the financial world. An expert in money management, she is a senior portfolio manager with Grove Creek Asset Management, which has offices in New York and Jacksonville, FL.

She said her father echoed the words of Jessica Cosgrave: "If anything happened to my husband, I'd



*Ed Sheerin, Virginia WATTIKER Sheerin, and Kevin Gallagher*

## Cosgrave



*Dr. Adele and Dr. Charles Bahn*

always have an education to fall back on. Twenty-one years later I found a suitable mate." A prominent hotelier, Edward Sheerin once owned the master franchise for Choice Hotels throughout the Caribbean.

Many at the Cosgrave Awards had not seen **Dr. Bahn** in more than 40 years. He is professor emeritus of psychology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. An expert in forensic psychology, he has trained hostage negotiators and has served on seminars in the United States and abroad dealing with terrorism. "I am still trying to understand people who attack so needlessly," he said.

Frances FISH Tompkins, a past Alumnae President, won the \$1,000 on the money tree. She gave it to her son, Laurence, in memory of his father. Only two days before, Frances spoke at the funeral of her husband, Harold Tompkins, distinguished lawyer who had served as a New York Supreme Court Justice, an assistant New York State Attorney General and a Civil Court Judge.



*Frances Fish Tompkins and her son, Laurence*

Among those attending were Mary Milton of New York, who roomed with Pam Adams at Finch, and Therese FERRARA Erienne of Essex Fells, NJ, who shared a room in Chalk House with Virginia Sheerin.

As she always does so generously, alumnae leader Ceil GAVIN Ainsworth honored the Cosgrave recipients at a cocktail buffet at her home the night before the presentations.



*Audrey Green, Susan Parker, Ceil Ainsworth, Michele Sibeud, and Marjorie Shulman*



*Candy Bowers, a longtime neighbor of Dr. Maxwell's*



*Bob and Magda Katz*

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## Finch College Professor, Dr. Margaret Maxwell, Dies at 93

Dr. Margaret Maxwell, longtime Charles Street resident and beloved Finch College professor, died Tuesday, April 17, 2007, at Beth Israel Hospital in New York. She was 93. Friends and acquaintances throughout Greenwich Village admired the slight woman with a porcelain complexion, ready smile and colorful chapeau, always on foot to the grocery, laundry or a favorite restaurant in the neighborhood she loved and where she lived for 65 years.

Dr. Maxwell taught European history and government at Finch from 1953 until the college doors at 52 East 78th Street closed in 1975.

She was a brilliant professor and strong mentor to her students, but her circle of life went far beyond academia. She embraced people of all talents and backgrounds.

"She was just attracted to people; she didn't care what they did," said Bill Gilinsky, New York professional singer/actor who knew Margaret for 30 years. "She was especially attracted to people, such as artists or performers with a need, who were just finding themselves. The walls of her apartment were filled with paintings by struggling artists. She didn't go to (sales) galleries. Her friends provided the galleries. She wasn't attracted to success; she was attracted to talent."

Gilinsky said Margaret loved to entertain, whether turning out elegant meals in her postage-stamp kitchen or throwing parties nearby at the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. Her birthday parties there are memorable. Friends of all ethnic and artistic backgrounds came to toast her and have a great time.

Devoted to Finch College and its legacies, she inspired the rebirth of the Finch College Alumnae Association in 1993. Never one to seek credit for anything, Margaret attributed the reorganization of the association to many loyal Finch alumnae. But they knew she was the catalyst, the energy and the glue that brought them together again. Margaret was thrilled that funds raised by the Alumnae Association Foundation went to college scholarships to further educational opportunities for women. She was always writing letters to Finch graduates to keep them informed and encourage them to support the Alumnae Association. Her voluminous "Class Notes" column for the Finch News was compiled from alumnae writing to her from across the country and around the world.

"She was the most special friend in my life," said Ceil Gavin Ainsworth, a past president of the Finch College Alumnae Association. "Margaret was such a person of today with a great sense of history."

Margaret's presence at Finch events was always anticipated for her warmth, her enthusiasm and her marvelous sense of style. She loved hats and knew how to wear them. A striking chapeau accented with a feather or romantic veil always complemented a beautiful outfit and she loved a big, floppy brim finished with a ribbon or flowers curling

around the crown. She had a closet full of big-brimmed hats of all colors. And no one will forget her stylish emerald green evening creation topped off with computer chips. She radiated youth, beauty and a vivacious interest in everything and everyone.

"Margaret has been a guidepost all along the way," said Robert Diffenderfer, fellow Village resident and former Finch professor. "We loved eating at neighborhood restaurants together, sharing stories of college days and keeping up on current events."

Although New York had been Margaret's home since 1942, she did not forget her pioneer roots back in Kansas and they did not forget her. In May, 2001, the former Margaret Wright was honored by her alma mater, Seaman High School, near Topeka, where she graduated in 1930. Margaret and her sister, Betty Leech of Oskaloosa, KA, grew up on farmland, homesteaded by their paternal great-grandparents near Grantville, KA.

Margaret graduated from Washburn University in Topeka, founded on 160 acres donated by her maternal great-grandparents, Col. John Ritchie and his wife, Mary Jane.

"He signed the deed to the land on a drumhead in the middle of the Civil War," she was proud of saying. John Ritchie led an Indian regiment during the war and helped slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad. He and his wife offered them refuge at their home (now a museum) and after the war he gave them land and built houses for them to settle down and start new lives.

It was at Washburn that Margaret met her future husband. She was an assistant to Bertram Mac Maxwell, political science professor. She helped him with research for *The Soviet State: A Study of Bolshevik Rule*, published in 1934. Margaret graduated in 1935 and won a scholarship to Wellesley College where she earned a master's in European history. She later received her Ph.D. from New York University. In 1936 she and Mac were married and went to Geneva, Switzerland, to collaborate on research at the League of Nations Library. In 1942, the Macmillan Publishing Company asked Mac to be an editor so he and Margaret moved to New York and into the apartment on Charles Street where Margaret lived the rest of her life. Her husband, whom she admired greatly and spoke so fondly of, remained with Macmillan 25 years. He died in 1972.

Members of New York's Russian community were frequent guests in Margaret's home. She befriended and assisted many Russian women, new to the United States, in learning English and helping them in any way she could. She was a Russian scholar, spoke the language, translated Russian literature and poetry into English and wrote *Narodniki Women*. Her book memorialized the unsung women revolutionaries who fought for freedom and equality in Russia from the 1870s to 1917.

## Dr. Maxwell (continued)



Attendees at Dr. Maxwell's memorial at the Birch Wathen Lenox School on June 9, 2007, wore hats in tribute.

In 1970, Margaret established a program in women's studies at Finch and produced several books highlighting virtually unknown heroines of history. She contributed to *Rural and Urban Change in India* and during a summer of study in India in 1973, she wrote *The Indian Women's Liberation Movement*.

Margaret's zest for life is a huge part of her legacy. Before breakfast she would get down on the floor to do her exercises and then be ready to meet the day. She used to swim several times a week at NYU. She tackled New York by bus, subway and foot, rarely succumbing to a taxi. Her daily schedule was packed: Maybe an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in the morning, a matinee at Lincoln Center, and later a concert at Carnegie Hall, a play or a Village puppet show.

Always the Finch historian others sought out for facts and anecdotes, Margaret wrote about the college in an essay, "Finch, Yesterday and Today." It begins:

"How to define the spirit of Finch? To everyone it is different. But to everyone, even to the very end in 1975, after several requirements of 'genteel' behavior and dress had been abandoned, Finch remained close to what it was as Mrs. (Jessica Finch) Cosgrave founded it in 1900. A combination of elegance and awareness of the world."

Besides her Finch ties, Margaret also taught European history at New York University, was director emeritus of the NYU Alumni Association and was a founding trustee of the Huguenot Heritage in New York.

Survivors include her sister, Betty Leech; a nephew, William Wright Leech, his wife, Anita Roskam, and their son, Jack Roskam Leech, all of Roosevelt, NJ; a niece, Elizabeth Ann Leech, her husband, Stephen Frazier, and their children, Jonathan Frazier and Rosalie Frazier, all of Mercer Island, WA, and a stepson, Richard Maxwell, of

North Carolina.

The family suggests memorial contributions be made to the Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation, 1471 Third Avenue, #213, New York, NY 10028; to New York University, 25 West Fourth Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY.10012, or to a beneficiary of choice.

There have been a number of donations to the Finch scholarship fund in Dr. Maxwell's name. As of the printing of this newsletter, \$7400 has been received. At a recent meeting of the Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation, it was determined that one scholarship will be given annually as the Margaret Maxwell Memorial Scholarship.

Among the people sending notes and remembrances were Finch colleagues, alumnae and friends. Former Finch librarian Mark Piel wrote, "Dr. Maxwell was the soul of Finch. What a wonderful person." Martha Mason '43 wrote, "Wonderful lady!"

Barbara Boyle Braverman: "She was one of the first enthusiasts of Twyla Tharp and knew I was aspiring to be a professional dancer. Dr. Maxwell was a New York treasure!"

Starr Ezra: "MM was at Finch when I graduated in '63 and when two sisters graduated too—quite a gal!"

Gene Ritchie: "What a wonderful person she was, and an inspiration for everyone."

Darcie Denkert: "Finch women love, respect and will always remember Margaret Maxwell and her kindness and intellect."

Stacey Moss: "Her spark and vitality, her attitude and genuine love will never be forgotten."

## Class Notes

### '50s

**Nancy Azara**, curator and artist, exhibited in "Paths: Real and Imagined" at Woodstock this summer. In September, Nancy gave a talk at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center of the Brooklyn Museum. "The Evolution of a 1970s Feminist Artist" chronicled her life, artwork and involvement with the Feminist movement from its inception, when the NY Feminist Art Institute held an opening in 1979 at One World Trade Center. Nancy's lecture included slides showing her earliest works to the recent "Passages," shown at Andre Zarre Gallery in Chelsea, as part of the "Kool Aid" exhibition last summer. She also read from her book, *Spirit Taking Form/ Making A Spiritual Practice of Making*



*Art.* **Joan THOMAS Haris** and her current husband, Bob, remets his first date from forty years ago at a cocktail party hosted by Lois Moran Ziegler. Joan reports Bob is running marathons. **Norma KAPLAN Smith** recently was reminiscing about fun times hanging art with her husband and Dr. DeMarco in the Finch Museum. She keeps in touch with Mrs. DeMarco in Rochester. **Norma MEER Dallal** and her husband enjoy living in Albuquerque, and are involved in the local community and symphony.



### '60s

**Felice FORER Axelrod**, recipient of the Cosgrave Award in 1998, said the Finch Web site looks great. **Darcie Denkert** who is involved with the success on Broadway of *Legally Blond*, announced that the show will air on MTV. **Julia Brewick** reports, "It's been a very busy fall at the St. Francis Counseling Center. While I keep my nose to the grindstone, I always remember my Finch friends and their message to me to not take myself too seriously." **Nina DiGIOVANNA La Bruna** and husband, Vinny, will celebrate a gala fiftieth wedding anniversary by taking a cruise with their two sons and their wives and children.



### '70s

**Joannie PLEVRITIS Danielides** and her family spent the summer in their new beach house in Greece. Business is flourishing at Danielides Communication, Inc. with new clients like Lands' End and New York University College of Nursing. Joannie and her husband, Nick, have two sons, one at Georgetown Law School, and another who just graduated from Duke.

### Faculty

Dr. Jane Ross was elected president of the Redding League of Women Voters and enjoys doing public relations for various community organizations.

### In Memoriam

Katharine Price Paschall  
April 14, 1916 - March 17, 2007

### Keep Us Posted

Send us news of weddings, publications, recordings, new positions, recent travels, and more. We want to know!



### PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR DUES

Annual dues are \$50. They are crucial to funding events sponsored by the Finch College Alumnae Association and to the Finch Scholars and continuing college education grants provided by the Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation. Now you can pay your dues for life! Make one payment of \$300 and you become a Lifetime Member of the Association. Please send dues to:

The Finch College Alumnae  
Association Foundation  
1471 Third Avenue, PO Box 213  
New York, New York 10028

THANK YOU!!



### This Year Make a Tax-Free Charitable Donation to Finch from your IRA



Support your alma mater! The Pension Protection Act allows traditional IRA owners who have attained the age of 70 1/2 the ability to make charitable contributions of up to \$100,000 per year directly from their IRA without incurring any income tax consequences.

The donation must be made to a qualified tax-exempt organization--Finch College Association Foundation qualifies--and may not be made to a private (non-operating) foundation, a supporting organization or donor-advised fund operated by a public charity or an entity such as a Charitable Remainder Trust where another person would have an interest. Ask your tax advisor about this possibility.

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## Letter from the President

Dear Finch friends,

The time elapsed since our last newsletter has been bitter-sweet.

It is bitter as we mourn the passing of our inspirational and beloved Dr. Margaret Maxwell and sweet in that we have reached an all-time high in the number of dues-paying members in the organization which she was so instrumental in establishing.

We have increased our ranks of lifetime members to 49 and hope to at least double the number by next year. We would like to thank our newest members for joining: Pamela DAMMANN Adams, Barbara ZIET Glickman, Chanti RIVERA Grosso, Joan A. Haris, Catherine CAPOROSSI Jamieson, Alix E. Stuart King, Ines Hohner Mahon, Mary SIMPSON March, and Patricia Russell.

Dues-paying members represent less than 20 percent of our current mailing list. We want to see this number rise significantly.

I want to take this opportunity to let you know about our upcoming events.

We invite all to attend a private tour and reception on November 28 from 6-8 pm, at A CAMEROON WORLD, Art and Artifacts from the Marshall & Caroline Mount

Collection at Queensborough Community College Art Gallery. See also the back calendar to learn about our Night at the Opera on November 13.

Mark your calendars now for our main annual event, The Jessica Cosgrave Awards ceremony on May 13, 2008 at The Cosmopolitan Club. Send us your nominations for this year's winners. Forms can be downloaded from our Web site [www.finchcollege.org](http://www.finchcollege.org). We continue to make progress in expanding the information available on our Web site so please visit.

It is wonderful that as more alumnae are rediscovered our ranks of hands-on participation is growing.

New ideas for events and fundraising activities make our existence both joyful and meaningful as the number of Finch Scholarship awardees continues to grow. We gave four scholarships again this year and continued our support of the New York Womens Foundation.

I would like to thank all of those who have helped through the year. I look forward to reconnecting with old and new friends at our upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Cheryl YOUNG Deknatel '70

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## Singers Croon at Shutters

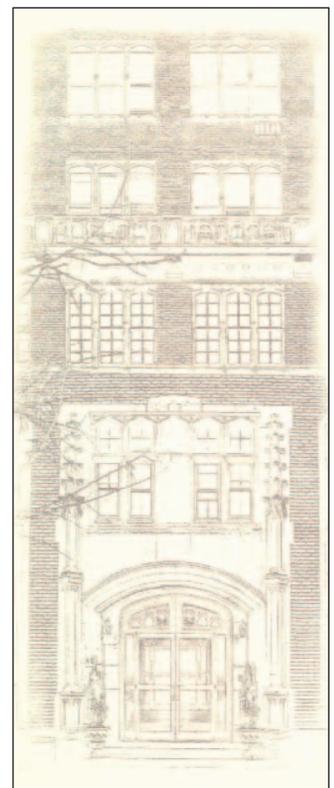


*Chicky Jovan (above) and Yvonne Roome entertained a crowd of Finchies and others at Shutters last summer. Television personality Joe Franklin attended and is seated next to Susan Davis.*

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## Finch Notecard for Sale to Raise Funds

Margaret Nakamura has designed a lovely folded Finch notecard that comes with a matching number #10 business sized envelope. The cream vellum card features Finch's Beaux Arts facade on East 78th St. and is printed in sepia green. Sets of 10 are \$25.00. Proceeds after costs will be donated to the Margaret Maxwell Memorial Fund. To order, make checks payable to Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation, on check memo line write MMMF, but *mail* it to: M. Nakamura, 145 E. 16th St. #16K, NY, NY 10003.



## Snapshots from Finch Trip to Portugal: October 2007



Several Finch alumnae and their spouses recently visited Portugal, on a trip planned by Yvonne Roome, who lives there part-time. A full story about the group trip will be in the next *Finch News*. Here are some photos ready at the time of the newsletter printing.

### FINCH COLLEGE ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

- **A NIGHT AT THE OPERA** • New York City Opera's *Cendrillon*, **Tuesday, November 13 at 7:30**, New York State Theater at Lincoln Center. Contact Cheryl Deknatel at 860-961-4461 to find out about tickets and plans to get together at intermission.
- **GENERAL MEETING** • Next date to be announced soon • Birch Wathen Lenox School, 210 E. 77th Street (between 2nd & 3rd Aves). All are welcome.
- **COSGRAVE AWARDS CEREMONY** • May 13, 2008  
Cosmopolitan Club 122 East 66th Street  
Send in Your Nominations!

## The Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation



PO Box 213  
1471 Third Avenue  
New York, New York 10028  
[www.FinchCollege.org](http://www.FinchCollege.org)