

# An Alumnnotes Extra

## HUNTER COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNAE/II ASSOCIATION

Vol. 15, No. 1A

September 1988

### CHRONOLOGY OF DISMISSAL OF CAMPUS SCHOOLS' PRINCIPALS AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

**[Sept. '83]** Jane Navarre appointed Principal of Hunter Elementary School.]

**Sept. '84** Alan Guma appointed Principal of Hunter High School.

**Sept. '85** Evelyn Jones Rich appointed Assistant (at present, Associate Dean) of Campus Schools, reporting to Dean Hugh J. Scott. Director of Programs in Education, Hunter College.

**Sept. '86** Principals of Campus Schools instructed to report directly to Dr. Rich, thereby no longer having direct access to Dean Scott.

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**Feb. 10, 1988** Acting President of Hunter College Tilden LeMelle calls meeting of all PTA officers of Hunter Campus schools and two members of HCHS Alumnae/II Association, at which he announces:

1. dismissal of principals of both the Campus Schools, effective at the end of the school year;
2. schedule for screening committee activities and replacement of principals;
3. possible move of the schools to a new site.

These announcements had been made to faculty and student meetings earlier that day. Afterward, HCHS student leaders convened and drew up a petition to retain Alan Guma as principal and began that evening to collect signatures on the petition.

**February 12-22** Schools closed for Winter Vacation.

**February 28** Alumnae/II Association Steering Committee meets, drafts letter to Acting President LeMelle protesting the dismissal of Principal Alan Guma without due process and requesting information on various points. Copies of this letter sent to Dean Scott, Dr. Rich, and CUNY trustees.

**February 24** PTA adopts resolution urging that Mr. Guma be continued as principal for at least the 1988-89 school year, and that a consultant be hired to examine such issues

### JANE LEWIS TO BE ACTING PRINCIPAL; SEARCH FOR PRINCIPAL REOPENED

Jane Lewis, former social studies teacher and PSC Chapter Chairperson at Hunter College High School, has been appointed Acting Principal of HCHS, effective August 1. Ms. Lewis, who is returning to Hunter after retirement, has extensive experience in working with faculty and students at the high school as well as with key officials at Hunter College. She is not a candidate for the principalship of the school, and her interim appointment is for the 1988-90 school year only.

The Screening Committee for the Principalship of the high school is resuming its search for candidates in September, and an advertisement for the position of principal of HCHS is being placed in the education pages of *The New York Times* early that month.

In other news, Dean Rich has reported that a contract has been given to architect Richard Dattner, whose son is an '88 graduate of Hunter High, to explore possible ways to expand the Campus Schools' facilities at their present site.

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as the governance of the Campus Schools and their relationship of to the College.

**March 1** Alumnae/II Association Steering Committee meets, drafts letter announcing general meeting and reasons for it.

**March 8** Association receives reply from Acting President LeMelle.

**March 10-11** Students demonstrate in front of Hunter College to protest dismissal of principal; leads to meeting of student leaders with Dean Scott and concessions on several issues. Dean Scott and G.O. President Joel Hornstein issue memo specifying these "general areas of understanding:"

1. improving communications among various HCHS constituencies and administrators at Hunter college, and
2. formation of the Dean's Cross-Sectional Advisory Committee representing those constituencies and administrators for this purpose;
3. formation of a student committee to meet periodically with Dean Scott;
4. administration at college promises flexibility on time frame for finding new principal for high school;
5. relationship between Associate Dean and High School Principal will be examined by Dean Scott with HCHS students, teachers, and administrators;

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# ALUMNOTES

—published by the Hunter College High School  
Alumnae/i Association

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## SERVING ON THE SCREENING COMMITTEE

by Clarice Mertz

The one word that best characterizes the Screening Committee's work is "democratic." Each of the ten members of the committee, which represented every constituent group—students, faculty, parents, alumnae/i—had an equal and respected voice in committee deliberations. The only non-voting member was the chairperson, Dr. Evelyn Rich, whose sole function was to facilitate the work of the group. She did not participate in the selection or evaluation of candidates.

Although the principal position was not advertised until late in the spring, 50 individuals submitted resumes. The committee determined that the primary criteria for the position would be experience working with the gifted and in developing and implementing innovative, effective programs. The curriculum vita of each applicant was read by every committee member and discussed by the group. The committee invited 20 percent of the candidates to be interviewed. Group discussion followed each interview, and about half of the interviewees were invited to a second interview.

From this pool, the committee submitted two names to Dean Scott. The two people came to the school on two successive days to meet with the faculty, parents, students, and alumnae/i. This gave them the opportunity to talk about themselves and their philosophy and to answer questions. After the constituent groups met with the candidates, however, there was no clear consensus for a recommendation. It was then decided not to make a permanent appointment at this time, and to renew the search process in September.

Service on the Screening Committee was onerous because of constraints due to an extremely tight time frame. Nevertheless, it was an interesting learning experience for me. I am glad that I could serve as your representative.

## Dear Members,

To begin, we extend a warm welcome to Acting Principal Jane Lewis, a friend of our school, and are grateful that she has agreed to the challenge of guiding Hunter through this year of transition.

When I accepted the nomination to become president of this association earlier this year, I never anticipated the changes that have occurred since and will continue to take place in the coming months. But be there calm or crisis, it is important that lines of communication be kept open at all times. They must be kept open among us as alumnae/i, and that includes members of the class of 1918, 1988 and all who graduated during the 70 years in between—hence this ALUMNOTES EXTRA.

Each class and each graduate takes from Hunter a different experience. One reason is that times change, and the school changes with the times. How it changes is of concern to all who treasure the school. If we are wise, we will learn from the past, retain what is valuable and plan and accept change. With this in mind we publish, elsewhere in this issue, the thoughtful comments of former principal Alan Guma on issues facing the school, offered in his farewell speech to parents, and the views of Dean Evelyn Rich on the mission of the school, written in response to the editorial in the spring '88 ALUMNOTES.

Alumnae/i must have continuous open contact with the high school administration, faculty, students and parents and with the college administration that governs the high school; let our goal be to talk to each other with reason, honesty and fairness, and to listen with attention and respect. In accord with these goals Acting Principal Jane Lewis and Dean Evelyn Rich have been invited to address Alumnae/i on September 22 and October 22 respectively. I am delighted that they have made time in their busy schedules to join us, and I hope that there will be a large turnout of Alumnae/i to hear them.

Hunter High will benefit from the support of a strong and caring Alumnae/i Association in the coming year. I ask all of you to become involved and give that support.

*Eve Rosenzweig*

President

**ALUMNAE/I ASSOCIATION OFFICE**

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## FAREWELL REMARKS

by Alan Guma

*Following are excerpts from a talk given by Alan Guma to the Parents Association on June 15, 1988:*

Rather than review what I believe has been accomplished during the past four years, I would prefer to suggest several issues I believe need to be addressed in the coming years....

First, and clearly the most central, is the issue of the school's governance. Hunter is certainly a unique institution in terms of its status outside of the Board of Education yet publicly funded and tuition-free.... During periods of benign neglect from the College and the larger CUNY system, this special place can work reasonably well, but when the College or CUNY get interested in the Campus Schools, the absence of a clearly-defined and comprehensive statement of the school's governance makes [the school] vulnerable to those who, either out of ignorance or mischief, want to change the school....

Second, there must be a rational, timely budget process [that] involves all of the school's constituencies. This is important to the orderly operation of the school [as well as for] the expanding student activities program [which, I believe,] has reached [its] limit.... Indeed, we cannot properly support some that we have now. I hope that... a clear statement [can be] embedded in the budget, that an extensive and quality program of activities is vital to the full education of our students, and that sufficient funds are allocated to hire qualified coaches, directors, and advisors, and to properly equip and support those activities.

Third, there are curriculum issues that need continued review. Some areas need a complete redesign. [Among other issues are] the limitation on the number of courses students may take... whether letter grades, rather than number grades, should be used to reduce the negative effects of competition among students over a point or two... [and what to do about] Regents tests—tests which have no significance in terms of awarding Regents Scholarships, but which constrain our calendar and are viewed by many students and faculty as so far beneath the quality level of this school as to be silly.

Fourth, there is the matter of relations between the faculty and parents... which, I hope and believe, have improved.... I believe that establishing more effective parent-faculty relations to be so important to the very life of this school, [and] I hope that you will find ways to reach out further to a faculty that has not always been pleased with your involvement. Our teachers... have a very powerful sense of their role in the school, and most of that is very positive. They are, in the main, an appropriately remarkable group to work with your remarkable sons and daughters. I believe that many on the faculty now acknowledge the vital role of a strong parent group for the school, and with some work, I hope that this relationship will grow and mature.

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## DEAN RICH REPLIES

To the Editor,

The focus of the Hunter College Campus Schools has not shifted since 1955 when the Board of Higher Education approved a plan to have the Campus Schools serve as a teacher-education laboratory for the education of intellectually gifted girls. Boys were admitted in 1974.

The Board of Trustees of the City University of New York charged the Campus Schools to provide an enriched educational experience for intellectually gifted children while serving a research, laboratory, demonstration function.

The mission is communicated to principals and headmasters of sixth grade schools with information about eligibility to take the admissions test for the High School. It is also communicated directly to parents of students applying for admission to the Elementary School. All parents of admitted students are required to sign a statement acknowledging the schools' research function and permitting the schools to include their children in research, demonstration projects.

This role distinguishes the Campus Schools from public schools operated by the New York City Board of Education. The high quality of education our students receive today is, in part, based upon the results of research done years ago in the schools. We believe that research currently in progress will improve still further the education offered to successive generations of Hunter students.

I am delighted to inform you that Hunter College has received a grant for \$140,000 from the National Science Foundation to continue the work on the gender project begun this year by Sheila Strauss, teacher of mathematics, and Rena Subotnik, Professor of Gifted Education, at Hunter College. The project studies the performance of male and female students in the High School BC calculus classes....

We share the common goals of excellence in education and support for our school. I pledge to work with you in this common endeavor to make excellent schools even better in the years ahead.

Sincerely,  
Evelyn Jones Rich

Associate Dean

April 18, 1988

## DATES TO NOTE

Thursday, September 22, 6-8 pm. Meet Jane Lewis, Acting Principal of HCHS. Roosevelt House, 49 East 65th Street, New York.

Saturday, October 22, 1-3 pm. Meet with Evelyn Rich, Associate Dean. Hunter High, 94th Street and Park Avenue, New York.

Thursday, December 8, 6-8 pm. Steering Committee. Hunter College, East Building, 12th floor, 68th Street and Lexington Avenue, New York.

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Sunday, June 4. Annual Reunion. Details to be announced.



## CHRONOLOGY

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6. HCHS students will be represented on New Site Committee, which will be broad-based and develop criteria for a future location for the school; and
7. If a new principal is not identified in time to take office at the start of the school year, an interim principal will be selected by Dean Scott from the personnel now at the high school.

**March 22** Acting President LeMelle announces formation of a new Site Committee, which includes some people proposed by alumnae because of prior experience. Dean Scott announces formation of Screening Committee.

**March 23** HCHS Alumnae/i Association holds General Meeting at Roosevelt House. Two motions passed:

1. request to Dean Scott to retain Alan Guma as interim acting principal if appointment procedure can not be completed before the school year ends, June 30, 1988;
2. request to CUNY trustees to clarify dismissal procedures.

**March 28** Alumnae/i Association Executive Board drafts letters communicating the above motions and sends them to Dean Scott, Chairperson James Murphy of CUNY, Acting President LeMelle, and the CUNY trustees.

**April 14** Screening Committee holds its first meeting; Clarice Mertz represents alumnae/i. Memo from Dean Scott announces the formation of the Dean's Cross-Sectional Advisory Committee, as promised in memo of March 11; Theodora Christon '42 and Hannah Lee '78 represent alumnae/i.

**April 16** Alumnae/i Association Steering Committee hears report from Mildred Speiser '49, alumnae/i representative on Site Committee, about various site options.

**April 17** Ad for both principals' positions appears in the Sunday *New York Times*.

**April 18** Dean Rich sends letter to the ALUMNOTES editor responding to an editorial in the Spring issue (see page 3). Also included were fact sheets on both Campus Schools and a consent form that parents are required to sign to allow their children's "participation in research and demonstration projects."

**April 30-May 6** Three HCHS Alumnae/i Association representatives (Francine Eisen '42, Mildred Speiser '49, Marjorie Pearle Weiser '51) join college alumni in interviewing five

## FAREWELL

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Fifth, there is the continued need to find more funding, not only from city government—a source that will necessarily always be limited and grudging—but also from corporations and foundations.... That the school has neglected to establish a strong and effective development program was, for me, an immediate and major disappointment. The resources are here in this city. They need to be developed....

Finally, and very specifically directed to parents, is my continued belief that ways must be found not only to involve more parents in more school-related functions, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to facilitate informal networking, or parent-support groups. This is... neither an easy place nor an easy time to raise adolescents. The school cannot, of course, dictate a value system, but it can and should help parents come together to share their concerns about parenting so that the fine young people we all care so much about experience a slightly more coherent world.

What can I possibly say to you that can fully express my appreciation for the kindness and support you have extended to me, not just these past few months, but throughout the past four years? Thank You is not enough, but it is all I can say. I can never forget your support, and I will always be grateful.

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final candidates for the presidency of Hunter College and making recommendations to CUNY Trustees.

**April-June** Screening Committee meets regularly; reviews vitae of candidates for principal position; interviews and makes a recommendation to Dean Hugh Scott.

**Late June** It is announced that no principal has been named for the 1988-89 school year.

**June 27** Paul LeClerc, a French scholar who has served as provost, vice-president for academic affairs, and deputy president of Baruch College since 1984, named President of Hunter College by CUNY Trustees, effective September 1.

**July 28** Dean Rich announces the appointment of Jane Lewis, former faculty member, as Acting Principal of HCHS for the 1988-89 school year.

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