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**Monroe College Confers Degrees at 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement**

*Five Local Bronx High School Seniors Are Among the Graduates*

**BRONX, NY, June 15, 2021** -- [Monroe College](#), a national leader in educating urban and international students, held Commencement today to celebrate the academic achievements of its exceptional Class of 2021. More than 2,400 students participated.

The College's 88<sup>th</sup> annual Commencement was held at 5:00 pm, with a virtual procession of the graduates organized by academic school following at 6:00 pm. Among this year's graduates were five high school seniors from Gotham Collaborative High School who had taken college-level dual enrollment classes through Monroe as juniors and seniors. The students – Amir Bernard, Beenie Garcia, Gabriela Henry, Precious Jackson, and Nicholas Maisonet – each graduated today with an Associate degree in Human Services, making them both high school AND college graduates this year.

"Today's Commencement was filled with great joy, pride, and admiration for our Class of 2021," said Marc Jerome, president of Monroe College. "I am so proud of our graduates for staying focused on their goals and not letting anything – including a global pandemic – stop them. They are ready, resilient, and inspired – and I cannot wait to see what they do next."

Hill Harper, renowned actor from shows such as "The Good Doctor" and "CSI: NY" opened the virtual program with stirring words that paid tribute to the graduates' significant accomplishments, while also reminding them that they had only just begun their promising journeys. Other celebrities offering congratulatory words during the program were actor and rapper Ice-T; actor, comedian, and game show host Anthony Anderson; and popular recording artists Ginuwine, Shenseea, Kes the Band, and Machel Montano.

Kathy Martinez of Brooklyn, New York, is also among this year's graduates. In 2017, she participated in an episode of "Celebrity Undercover Boss" that featured world-renowned chef Marcus Samuelsson seeking to help promising culinary talents achieve their professional dreams. His search quickly came to Monroe College, which partnered with him to offer a full tuition scholarship to Ms. Martinez so that she could attend the College's award-winning Culinary Institute of New York. "Chef Kathy" was preparing

meals at a homeless shelter and dreaming of attending culinary school when Chef Samuelsson – disguised at the time – learned about her incredible culinary talents, creativity, and passion.

Graduates in the Class of 2021 represented 45 countries. In addition to students from the U.S. and its territories, there were sizable contingents from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, China, Dominica, Dominican Republic, India, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia participating in today's ceremonies.

The College today conferred 357 Master's degrees; 1,119 Bachelor's degrees; and 910 Associate degrees this year, as well as awarded 70 professional certificates.

The College's three-semester academic calendar enables Monroe students to earn 45 or more college credits per year (compared to the 30 credits college students typically earn per year at other institutions). That means that many of the graduates today earned their Bachelor's degree in three years or their Associate degree in less than two years.

Today's Commencement celebration was held virtually to safeguard the health and wellness of the graduates, their families, and College faculty, and staff. The College hopes to hold in-person celebrations for each of its academic schools later in the year should COVID conditions further improve.

### **ABOUT MONROE COLLEGE**

Founded in 1933, Monroe College is a recognized leader in urban and international education. The College is proud of its innovative programs to increase college access, affordability, and completion outcomes, especially among first-generation students.

Monroe educates 8,000 students each year, offering Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs from New York campuses in the Bronx and New Rochelle, as well as in the Caribbean nation of St. Lucia. Students may also pursue degree programs through Monroe Online.

Programs are offered through Schools of Allied Health Professions, Business and Accounting, Criminal and Social Justice, Education, Hospitality Management, Information Technology, and Nursing, as well as through its King Graduate School. Liberal arts and continuing education programs are also available. For more information and admissions criteria, please visit <http://www.monroecollege.edu>.