



Office of the President

October 31, 2016

Subcommittee on Honorary Degrees
Academic Senate

Dear Subcommittee Members,

I write to nominate Queens College alumnus, Donald Brownstein to be a recipient of an honorary degree at Queens College. Mr. Brownstein is Chief Investment Officer and CEO of Structured Portfolio Management, LLC, a company managing \$2 billion in five partnerships. His flagship fund, the Structured Servicing Holdings LP, returned 50 percent in the first 10 months of 2010, putting him at the top of Bloomberg's markets list of the 100 best-performing large hedge funds.

Dr. Brownstein's success as a financier is particularly outstanding given his humble beginnings growing up in a working class family in the Bronx and his professional trajectory leading up to his career in finance. For twenty years prior he was a professor in the Departments of Philosophy at the University of Kansas and the University of Texas. He holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Minnesota, a B.A. in Philosophy from Queens College and was a fellow at the Center for the Study of Language and Information at Stanford University.

Particularly meaningful to Queens College is Dr. Brownstein's continued interest in and dedication to our students as they pursue their degrees in the humanities. Deeply inspired by his undergraduate experience at Queens College in the 1960s, Dr. Brownstein donated \$1,000,000 to Queens College in 2012 in the name of Distinguished Professor John J. McDermott who he credits as being his main inspiration for obtaining his Ph.D. in Philosophy and providing the intellectual framework that continues to support his professional success. *The Donald I. Brownstein/John J. McDermott Honors Scholarships in the Humanities*, funded by this million dollar gift, make \$5,000 scholarships (up to 20 given out per year) possible for undergraduate students in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, Languages and Literary, Mathematics, Philosophy and Sociology.

His involvement with the College extends beyond philanthropic contributions. Dr. Brownstein has also helped to organize an on-campus lecture featuring his mentor John McDermott. He also visits our campus annually to speak with students, and comes back to greet and mentor his scholarship recipients.

Don Brownstein's professional success and his commitment to the educational advancement of our students exemplify the College's mission of learning to serve. His nomination clearly falls within the guidelines of a recipient to be "honored for making a significant contribution to the mission of the College."

For these reasons, I believe Mr. Brownstein is especially suited to receive this important College recognition and I recommend him with the highest enthusiasm

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Felix', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Ph.D.
President

Don Brownstein
Biography

Don Brownstein grew up in a household of modest means in the Gun Hill section of the Bronx. Through his dedication and hard work he rose to become Chief Investment Officer and CEO of Structured Portfolio Management, LLC. Prior to creating Structured Portfolio Management in 1997, he founded and managed CDC Servicing, Inc., a specialized investment subsidiary of the Caisse des Depots et Consignations for four years. From 1988 - January 1993 Don worked in portfolio management at Franklin Savings Association; in the twenty years prior, he was a professor in the Departments of Philosophy at the University of Kansas and the University of Texas. He holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Minnesota, a B.A. in Philosophy from Queens College in New York City and was a fellow at the Center for the Study of Language and Information at Stanford University. Don lives adjacent to the Treetops property, which TPL helped to conserve in 2000, and loves to go fishing whenever he can. Mr. Brownstein also sits on the board of directors for Mill River Park Collaborative.

Dr. Brownstein donated \$1,000,000 to Queens College in 2012 in the name of Distinguished Professor John J. McDermott. He felt that the philosophy classes that he took from Dr. McDermott at QC in the 1960s inspired him to obtain a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Minnesota and become a philosophy professor at the University of Kansas.

The million dollar gift was made to establish a scholarship endowment fund that supports humanities students. *The Donald I. Brownstein/John J. McDermott Honors Scholarships in the Humanities* are \$5,000 scholarships (up to 20 given out per year) for undergraduate students in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, Languages and Literary Studies (e.g., English), Mathematics, Philosophy and Sociology . His involvement with Queens College includes organizing a campus lecture, annual visits to the campus to speak with students, and mentoring his scholarship recipients. Dr. Brownstein was honored at the Queens College GALA in 2014 where he donated another \$100,000 towards the College.