



## Trailblazer: Dean Thelma Malle's Tireless Commitment to Student Success



***Dean Thelma Malle***

After a distinguished 33-year career at Kingsborough, Dean Thelma Malle had an inspired idea for her send-off: “My colleagues wanted to raise money for a retirement party, but I encouraged them to instead raise money to create a scholarship.” After they raised an initial sum, Dean Malle continued to generously support the scholarship over the years. Today, this endowed fund endures as the *Science Scholars Award (funded in Honor of Dean Thelma Malle)*, and will be awarded to KCC students in perpetuity.

The award supports graduating KCC students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in the study of mathematics and science. Moreover, it honors Dean Malle’s legacy as one of Kingsborough’s most accomplished leaders and pioneers. Recruited just one year after the college first opened its doors, she began her KCC career as an assistant professor of Mathematics. Dean Malle was Associate Dean of Faculty for many years, and in the final decade of her service was given the title of Dean for Open Admissions and Special Programs, roles that gave her both the perspective and the power necessary to help students overcome their obstacles. “As dean, I focused on cases involving students who were underperforming academically because of financial issues,” she says. “I could identify with these students because I, too, had to rely upon scholarships to get through college.”

Decades later, Dean Malle's award continues to honor Kingsborough's brightest stars in math and science. Most recently, in 2016 her *Science Scholars Award* was presented to two outstanding students: Chen Gao, a physics major, and Katarzyna Maziarz, a chemistry major. Ms. Chen is now attending City College, while Ms. Maziarz is studying at Mount Holyoke College. Ms. Maziarz was also a 2016 recipient of the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship; valued at \$40,000 a year, the scholarship will help to fund the completion of her bachelor's degree. She is the fourth Kingsborough awardee of this scholarship in three years.

Looking back on her Kingsborough career, Dean Malle is proud not only of her own work, but of the college as a whole. "There's a common misconception that community colleges are mainly just 'job-trainers,' but Kingsborough is so much more than that," she says. "Kingsborough is place where students can not only get a degree, but develop an intellectual profile in a nurturing environment. That way, they are both prepared and motivated to contribute to our greater community and culture after they graduate."

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