



Breathing Room: Jill M. Marcus' New KCC Scholarship



Jill M. Marcus '78, Founder of the Jill M. Marcus Scholarship Award

"I felt like I could breathe," is how Jill M. Marcus '78 recalls her time at Kingsborough Community College (KCC). She was referring, in a literal sense, to KCC's sprawling campus, closeness to the water and its tranquility, far from the bustle of the city. But the statement is also an apt way to describe how KCC afforded her space to grow and thrive: "Whether I was in the classroom or on the tennis court, KCC always instilled in me the confidence to succeed."

Ms. Marcus also credits KCC for setting her on the path to becoming a lawyer. "I will never forget when my history professor, Sydney Rosenberg, asked me about my future plans," she says. "After we spoke, he encouraged me to pursue law. His opinion that I could embark on that kind of career gave me tremendous confidence."

That confidence would propel her through a distinguished legal career, culminating in her work as an attorney for District Council 37, New York City's largest public employee union. "I was never drawn to the 'corporate track,'" she says. "As a lawyer, I wanted to use my skills and expertise to directly improve people's lives."

In 2021, Ms. Marcus found another way to make a positive impact by establishing the *Jill M. Marcus Scholarship Award*. Her scholarship recognizes talented, hardworking KCC students who are hearing or visually impaired. "Ten years ago, I myself became hard of hearing, Not only did I find certain aspects of my life more challenging as a result, but I also wondered how hard it would be to experience this as a *student*."

Melissa Benjamin, a current KCC student, knows this struggle firsthand. "People like me who are hard of hearing are often put into a 'bubble' by society," the aspiring nurse says, which can lead to being unfairly overlooked or underestimated. Fortunately, Melissa has benefitted from KCC's Access-Ability Services, an office dedicated to providing equal opportunity for students with disabilities. "Access-Ability provides me so much help with the things I need—from interpreters to typewriters."

Last Fall, Melissa received another boost when she was named the *first-ever* recipient of the *Jill M. Marcus Scholarship Award*. "This scholarship was a blessing for me," she says. "It helped me to pay for my books and tuition for school." Thanks to Ms. Marcus' generosity, Melissa not only received vital financial support, but the recognition she deserved.

Ms. Marcus is grateful to be in a position to give back, particularly to the college that contributed so much to who she is today. She also hopes that other KCC alumni consider following in her philanthropic footsteps: "A student's education is one of the finest causes you can support. A scholarship not only gives a student a leg up in a difficult economy, but also has an exponential impact on their dreams."

What Will *Your* KCC Legacy Be?

Like Jill M. Marcus, you too can make a lasting impact on KCC students through establishing a scholarship or graduation award. [Click Here](#) to learn about the different kinds of scholarships available to students, and [Click Here](#) to make *your* life-changing donation today! **You can also call Dan La Noue, KCC's Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving, directly at 718.368.6540.**



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