

3-2011

1967 Convocation Charter

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Recommended Citation

Drobnicki, John A. 2011, March. 1967 convocation charter. *Academic Affairs Update* 4 (10): 15.

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“1967 Convocation Charter”

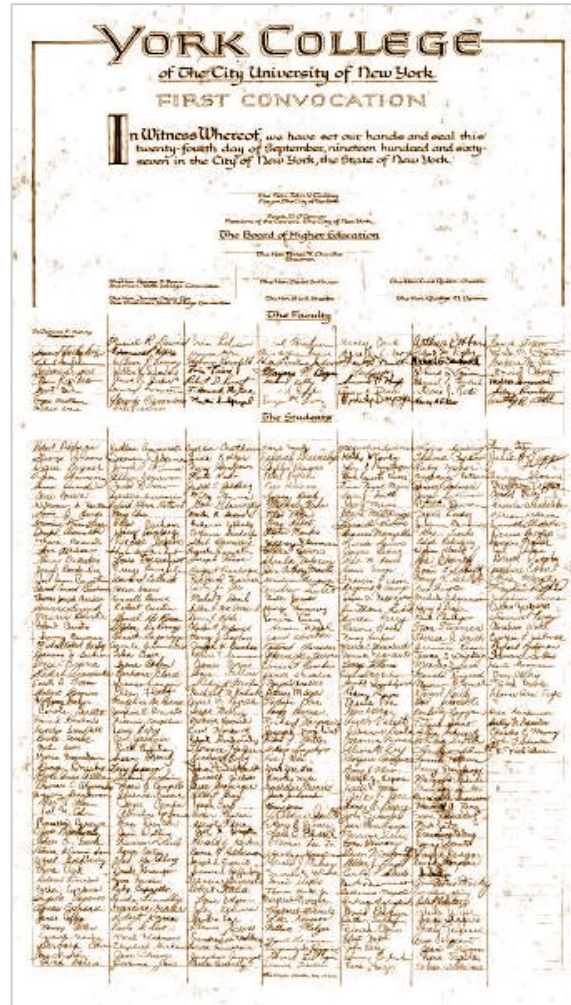
by John A. Drobnicki

In late January 2011, a phone call was transferred to the Chief Librarian, Prof. John Drobnicki. The caller was Lynn Szallar, a member of York’s first graduating class (1971), who wanted to know what happened to the “charter” that was signed by the members of the first class at their graduation – she thought the document was to be mounted in the President’s Office. This was news to both the Library and the President’s Office, and several people began to look into it.

After several days of searching, Prof. Robert Machalow (Head of Archives in addition to Circulation/Reserve) found the fragile large parchment in the Library’s archival collection. However, the document was *not* from 1971, but from York’s First Convocation in 1967. The document was signed by many of the original faculty members (including Prof. Robert Parmet and Prof. Samuel Hux, both of whom still teach full-time at York), as well as the members of York’s first

student class, including Carole Berotte (now Carole Berotte Joseph), who was recently appointed President of CUNY’s Bronx Community College; Henry “Hank” Sheinkopf, a noted political consultant; Jeremy Weinstein, who has served as Administrative Judge of the Supreme Court, Queens County Civil, since 2007; and Francisco Wong, who four years later would be the valedictorian of the Class of 1971. And, as she clearly remembered, Lynn Szallar’s signature is there, too.

According to the Convocation program, which is also part of the Library’s archival collection, the “Convocation on the Opening of York College” was held at the Colden Auditorium of Queens College on Sept. 24, 1967. The Invocation was given by The Rev. Canon Everett J. Downes, Rector of Zion Episcopal Church in Douglaston. The speakers were York’s first President, Dr. Dumont F. Kenny; Porter R. Chandler, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education;



Frank D. O’Connor, President of the NYC Council; Joseph T. King, Member of the NYS Board of Regents; and student J.M. Tepper of York College’s Class of 1971. The Convocation Address was given by Dr. William Arrowsmith (Professor of Classics and University Professor in Arts and Letters, University of Texas), who was a member of the Council on Academic Development, a group of eminent scholars appointed by President Kenny to help plan the future of York College. The Benediction was given by Rabbi Dr. Israel Mowshowitz of Hillcrest Jewish Center in Jamaica – could anyone have predicted that four years later York would be renting space at the Hillcrest Jewish Center after having moved from Bayside to Jamaica?