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# BAY RIDGE *Courier*

SERVING BAY RIDGE & DYKER HEIGHTS

EDUCATION PROFILE

## Serving Those Who Served Us All

BY DR. CLAUDIA V. SCHRADER

Hundreds of men and women who retire from the U.S. Armed Forces decide to seek higher education degrees at CUNY community colleges. They should be commended because the transition from military life back to civilian life and school isn't always easy and can present challenges in the areas of time management, technology and socialization with classmates. Many veteran-students are older than their classmates, and are juggling full-time work and raising a family in addition to school-work. But, with the help of their professors, staff and numerous college resources available to help, many student-veterans are feeling welcomed, staying in school and graduating. In September, Kingsborough Community College (KCC) had an enrollment of 165 VA-coded students, which include active military members, retired veterans, veteran dependent spouses and survivors. This month, I share with you profiles of two of our student veterans.



Retired Army Veteran Adrian Alfred, left, gives the thumbs up wearing a specially designed KCC Veterans Day T-shirt. Retired Army Reserves veteran Barbara Thomas-Timoll and her husband, Owen Timoll, also sport their T-shirts.

Barbara Thomas-Timoll is an army veteran who served 33 years in the military which included a two-year tour in Kuwait. After this service to her country, and her family (her children are now mostly grown), she decided to start checking items off her bucket list. One of the first things she always wanted to do was to earn a college degree. So,

at 57 years old, this Brownsville, Brooklyn resident, who also has a disability, began classes at KCC. Reflecting on where she is now, and thinking about her impending graduation in June, she shared "there's always going to be trials and tribulations, but if I can do it, anyone can do it."

After serving for over 6 years in the Army, Adrian Al-

fred decided that it was better to be a veteran with an education. In September, he transferred to KCC. Now, this 34-year-old criminal justice major also juggles a full-time job, working 8 to 10 hours on the midnight shift.

Like most colleges, KCC's Office of Military and Veterans Affairs (MAVA) was there for Barbara and Adrian and is there to help all veteran students get started and be successful. It provides priority course registration, certify and assist with applying for Veteran Affairs education benefits, and conduct helpful workshops, such as time management, tips for academic success, internships, meditation and more.

Our student-veterans are also eligible to take part in special programs, such as the Accelerated Studies in Associate Programs (ASAP), College Discovery and KCC Flex program. MAVA also connects them to resources within and outside of KCC, including tutorial services, accessibility services, and personal counseling. KCC also

has an armed forces student-veterans club for active military members, reservists, retired veterans and their spouses, dependents and supporters of veterans. The club usually meets on campus but, due to the coronavirus pandemic, meetings take place five days a week through Zoom and a virtual lounge.

At Kingsborough, we are happy to serve those who have selflessly served our country. And as the daughter of a military veteran, I am especially honored to support the success of the brave men and women of our armed forces.

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC), a 72-acre academic oasis located in beautiful Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn. Information on the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs and Veterans Day 2020 videos by student-veterans can be found at [https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/veteranaffairs/veterans\\_day.html](https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/veteranaffairs/veterans_day.html).

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