



## The Natural – Jennie Raffa’s Love For Art Lives On at KCC

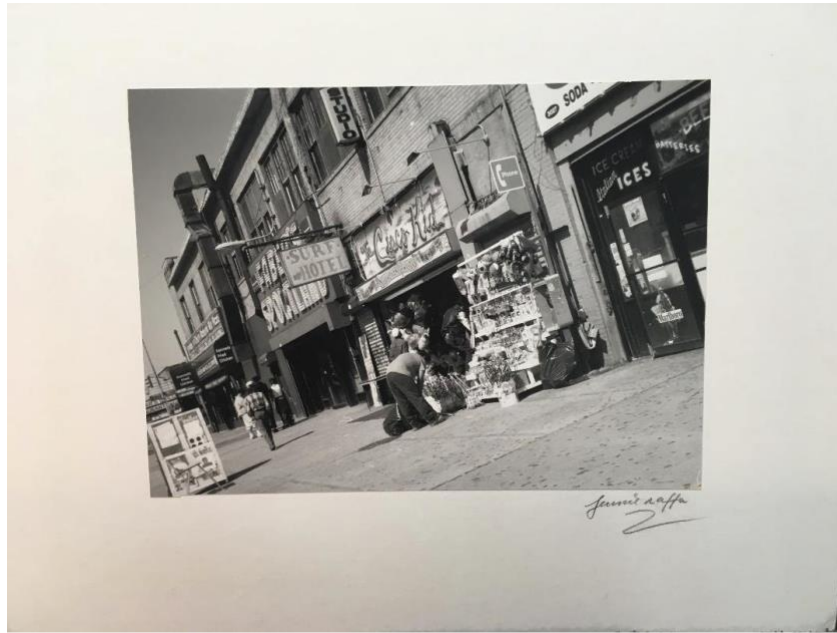


*Jennie Raffa displays two oil paintings she created in her KCC Art Class, including a portrait of \*Major Maria Rossi (left)*

For over ten years, the *Jennie Raffa Art Gallery Award* has recognized the talents of Kingsborough Community College students in the areas of ceramics, graphic design, photography and sculpture. By honoring artists across such a wide range of fields, the award draws more than a little inspiration from its donor and namesake, who passed away last year after having lived an eclectic and odds-defying life.

“Jennie was always very entrepreneurial,” says Gretchen Raffa, Jennie’s niece. “A true ‘go-getter,’ in a day when that was a rare and difficult thing for a woman to be.” The youngest of eight children, she was dubbed “Jennie Come Lately” as a kid, and perhaps this was why she approached life with the mindset of someone making up for lost time. Standing at just 4’10”, Jennie nonetheless loomed large on the athletic field, running hurdles in high school and later playing semi-professional softball.

Selflessness was another defining trait for Jennie. In World War II, she proudly served in the Navy Yard as a civilian. “Jennie was a very caring individual,” Gretchen adds. “She was always looking to be of service to her country and community.”



***{“Untitled” by J. Raffa, circa 1992}***

Her professional life covered many bases – she owned a dry cleaning service, worked in real estate, and later became a licensed radiology technician. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that retirement hardly slowed Jennie’s drive to explore uncharted horizons. In KCC’s My Turn program, she found invigorating new passions in oil painting, watercolor, and photography. Before long, her peers had elected her president of the college’s photography club.



***{“Brooklyn Bridge” by J. Raffa, circa 1997}***

Thanks to her outstanding instructors and supportive classmates at KCC, Jennie was able to flourish as an artist. Perhaps her proudest achievement was having one of her works accepted into the collection of the Woman's Military Museum in Washing, D.C. – an oil painting of \*Major Maria Rossi, the first woman to be killed in active combat in the Gulf War.

“Jennie established her scholarship to give back to KCC by helping other students,” Gretchen says. “She was not wealthy at the end of her life, but she cared very deeply about student success.” Through the *Jennie Raffa Art Gallery Award*, Jennie's spirit of tireless adventure will endure for future generations of like-minded KCC students.

After Jennie passed away last year, the Raffa family donated several of her paintings and photographs to the College's permanent art collection. “Art is a gift and source of joy; it comes from within,” Gretchen says. “I hope that current and future KCC students follow Jennie's example by continuously exploring new interests and challenging themselves. It's never too late to find a new calling.”

### **What Will *Your* KCC Legacy Be?**

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