



### Words Matter – Stephen Weidenborner’s Indelible Legacy at KCC



#### ***Professor Stephen Weidenborner {1934 - 2001}***

As an English professor and Department Chairperson, Stephen Weidenborner made an indelible impact on the students he taught at Kingsborough Community College. Though he has since passed away, his legacy lives on at Kingsborough through the *Stephen Weidenborner Memorial Prize*. Each year, Kingsborough awards the prize to a graduating student who writes an exceptionally thoughtful and eloquent essay on a topic relating to social justice. Portions of the fund will also be used to purchase eBooks for the KCC library. These eBooks will focus on social justice, political theory, history and other topics that Professor Weidenborner championed.

In the classroom, Professor Weidenborner did not teach writing from an ivory tower. Rather, he favored a more down-to-earth approach that focused on self-expression through clear, concise writing, which required attention to basic skills when necessary. “Steve felt that teaching basic writing skills was deeply meaningful work,” says his widow, Moira, who also taught at Kingsborough as an ESL adjunct lecturer. “He also understood the importance of meeting students where they were, skill-wise, and helping them build from there.”

Professor Weidenborner’s appreciation for the written word was matched only by his passion for social justice. Teaching during the tumultuous climate of the late 1960s and ‘70s, he encouraged his students to engage the world around them and think critically about their roles in society. “Steve understood that his students were at the age when they were becoming socially and politically aware,” Moira says. “He also recognized the particular challenges many faced growing up with socio-economic disadvantages.” Rather than providing an escape from the world, Professor Weidenborner saw writing as a conduit for his students to better understand it.

Steve Weidenborner challenged students to question unexamined authority and think seriously about fairness and justice in America. These issues are just as pertinent to today's students as they were decades ago. The Weidenborner family's hope is that by memorializing Steve in this way, Kingsborough students will continue to appreciate the power of words to move hearts and change lives. Through the *Stephen Weidenborner Memorial Prize*, Moira and Steve's three sons hope that Kingsborough students will continue to benefit from his vision. They also hope that those who remember Steve, as well as those who are inspired by his legacy, will continue to donate to the fund. To learn how you can support this fund, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Basile, Vice President for College Advancement, at [Elizabeth.Basile@kbcc.cuny.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.Basile@kbcc.cuny.edu) or 718.368.4539.

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