



## Brooklyn's Library Rebound

One of the nation's largest public libraries rebuilds itself with the help of chief strategist Jeanette Moy '02.

Interview by Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

IN 2010, LINDA JOHNSON, A SEASONED MUSEUM and foundation executive from Philadelphia, took the helm of the Brooklyn Public Library—an aging and financially strapped 60-branch behemoth ordered by the New York State Board of Regents to remake itself for a digital world.

▲ **OPEN SPACE:** In Brooklyn, space is a precious resource. Brooklyn Public Library's new Info Commons, with collaborative and solo workspaces as well as conference rooms, “reflects our philosophy of the future of libraries,” says Moy.

As the nation's fifth largest public library began a three-year, community-wide reassessment of its goals and operations, Johnson chose **Jeanette Moy** '02 to help shape and carry out its retooled model of library service.

Moy, the library's chief strategy officer and vice president for strategic planning, brings to the job no experience in libraries per se. Instead, she offers experience and a reputation as an energetic and forward-thinking advisor in the office of Mayor Michael Bloomberg who, as a senior policy advisor in the mayor's office of operations, played a key role in helping the city harness digital tools to provide residents

better access to information and services across agencies.

Now Moy is looking at the sprawling, Brooklyn Public Library system through a similar operational lens. Her assessment? “The thing I was most delighted to see when I first came to the library was the wide array of efforts taking place across the system.” But with a tight budget, she adds, “we need to find pathways for greater collaboration.”

Brooklyn is strikingly diverse, with more than a third of its 2.5 million residents born outside the United States and almost half speaking a language other than English at home. Nearly a quarter of Brooklyn residents live below the poverty line, while the borough has also become a magnet for highly educated professionals, many of whom are white, native English speakers,

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and newcomers to New York City.

“Much has been made in the media about the dichotomy between ‘old Brooklyn’ and ‘new Brooklyn,’” says Moy, using the labels with some hesitation. A native of Flushing, Queens, who lives in nearby Oakland Gardens with her husband and two daughters, Moy travels easily among diverse circles. Rooted in a predominantly immigrant community in the outer boroughs, she attended the storied public magnet school, Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan. She came to Rochester to study political science and public policy.

#### **Has the basic mission of the Brooklyn Public Library changed?**

The library has always been a physical place where local communities gather and access information, and each branch has been an independent library in and of itself. But increasingly, the library is relied upon for a range of educational and social services that extend far beyond providing access to books. Our patrons need more personal support from our staff than ever. Our librarians now have to serve as curators of a dizzying array of information, promoters of literacy at all levels, and referral points for social services, which are in much higher demand than we’ve ever seen before.

#### **How are these pressures changing how you operate?**

In the past, our branch professionals have spent an incredible amount of time behind the scenes managing collections—selecting, ordering, purchasing and processing materials—and also managing fine collection, cash boxes, and tracking lent materials.

We’ve helped by doing away with many of the time-consuming processes related to managing collections. Any patron can use a self-serve kiosk to check out materials, swipe a card to reserve a personal computer, and find most of our collection through a digital tool—online, on a mobile device, and in one of five languages. We’ve also implemented a floating collection. Patrons can return books at any of our 60 locations, and they will stay at that library. Over time, local community preferences start to shape the branch’s collection.

These changes have allowed our staff to spend more time with our patrons, and frankly freed up a ton of administrative space for public use.

#### **Which services are in greatest demand?**

In terms of the demand for social services, there are many individuals in our libraries who are unemployed or underemployed, lack a permanent residence, or may need to find mental health services. But usage varies tremendously by neighborhood. For instance, some of our branches that have the highest circulation—what the library has traditionally used as a metric of success—are in areas with large concentrations of immigrants. In other sites where you have low access to broadband, you have a lot of people coming in to use computers. In many communities with higher poverty levels, branches are community centers and safe spaces.

#### **How is the library using space in new ways?**

In January, we opened the Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons in the central library, in the space that formerly housed our popular collection. Not one book or magazine can be found in this space. Instead, we offer computers equipped with professional-grade software, conference rooms for public training, a media lab, and plenty of space for collaborative work and learning.

We’ve partnered with a local organization

called BRIC [formerly Brooklyn Arts Media]. They’re providing digital media training to patrons on site, helping us build a bridge between the people who are at the cutting edge of technology and those who are learning the basics.

The Info Commons reflects our philosophy of the future of libraries: it’s not just a matter of accessing the books, but rather a focus on how people learn, as well as how people access, and even create, content. Throughout the rest of the library, there are many other places where a patron can access physical materials. This is a space dedicated for people to work, learn, and create, and to promulgate everything they’ve learned to the rest of the community.

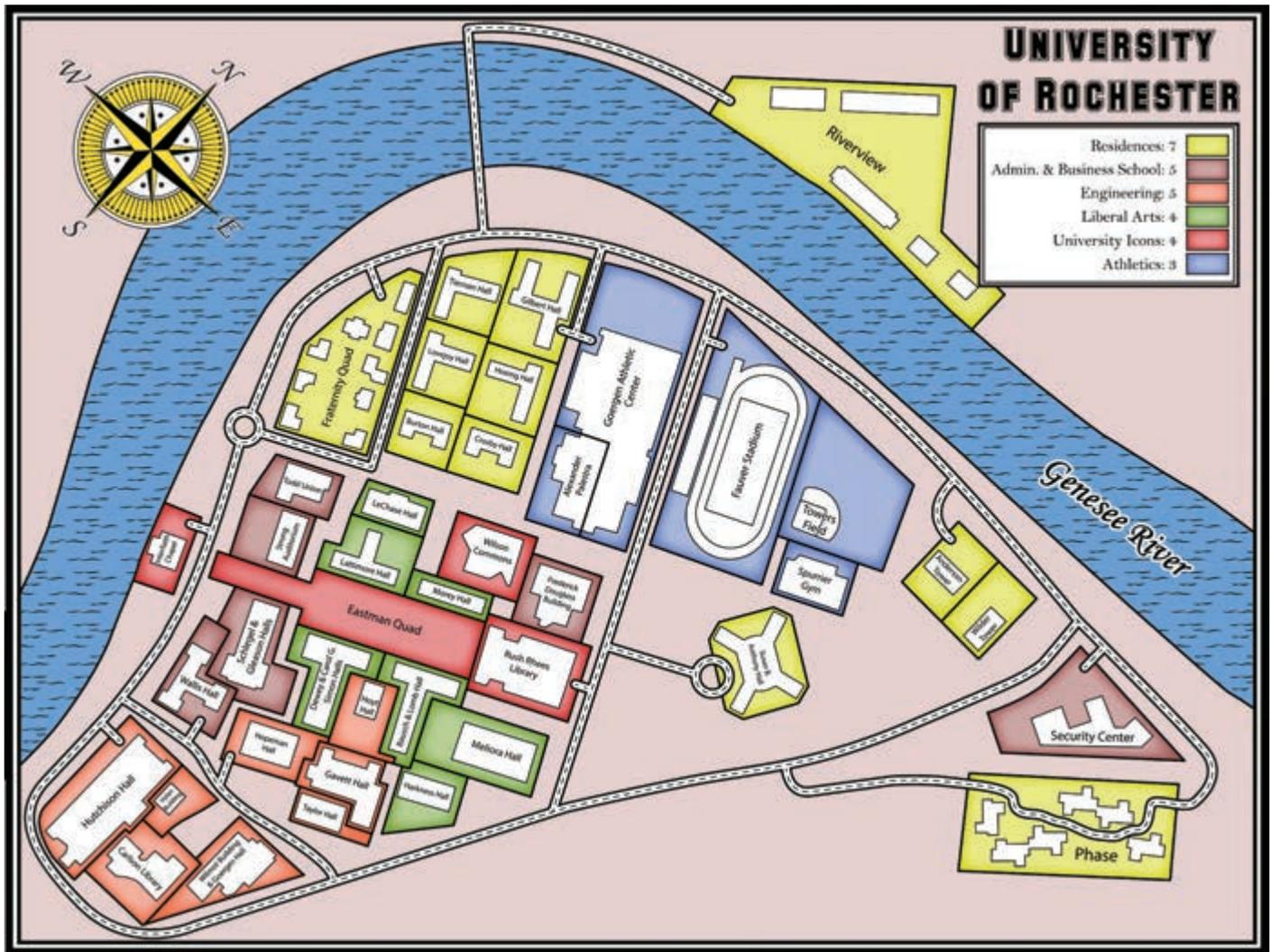
We’re seeing what works within the Info Commons, and if it’s a model that we can bring to other sites.

#### **Given Brooklyn’s wide disparities in wealth and education, how do you remain an essential resource for the entire community?**

It’s true that we have many neighborhoods in Brooklyn that don’t have access to high-speed broadband, a basic requirement for access to information in our increasingly digital world, while these neighborhoods are often right across the street from the most expensive zip codes in the city.

In many parts of Brooklyn, there are simply amazing content creators, who are very in line with the concepts of open data and information for all—values that align nicely with a public library. So we should be asking ourselves, how could those individuals bring their skills back to other parts of Brooklyn? Our partnership with BRIC, which has recently expanded beyond the central library to other branches, is one answer.

At the same time, affluent and well-educated patrons continue to be big users of the library. In Park Slope, for example, which is a fairly affluent neighborhood, our Mommy and Me story times are probably one of the hottest tickets in the neighborhood. **R**



# Want to Conquer Your Favorite City?

Luke Costanza '09 and Mac Stutzman '09, creators of Havoc Boards, can help guide your attack.

By Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

“HAVE YOU EVER VISITED A NEW PLACE AND asked yourself: What is the best way to conquer this territory? What are the key defensive positions for moving armies? And what are the choke points?”

Luke Costanza '09 posed just those questions last spring in a video uploaded onto Kickstarter.com.

The tongue-in-cheek video served an earnest purpose: He and Mac Stutzman

▲ **SO LONG, GENTLE WATERS:** Rochester’s blissful riverside campus is carved into strategic territories on Costanza and Stutzman’s Risk-style University of Rochester gameboard.

'09 were vying to raise \$20,000 on the online funding resource to turn an idea into a business. At midnight last July 17, their 45-day campaign closed with \$25,348, minus a small cut for Kickstarter, in the bank. That’s enough for the two to finance their new company, Bungled Board Games, and launch their first line of products, called Havoc Boards.

Brothers in the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity, Costanza, an optics major, and Stutzman, a history major, were big fans of the Hasbro board game Risk. After graduation, as roommates in Boston, they continued to play, and on a whim, drew up their own game board—a map of Boston—and invited friends over to play.

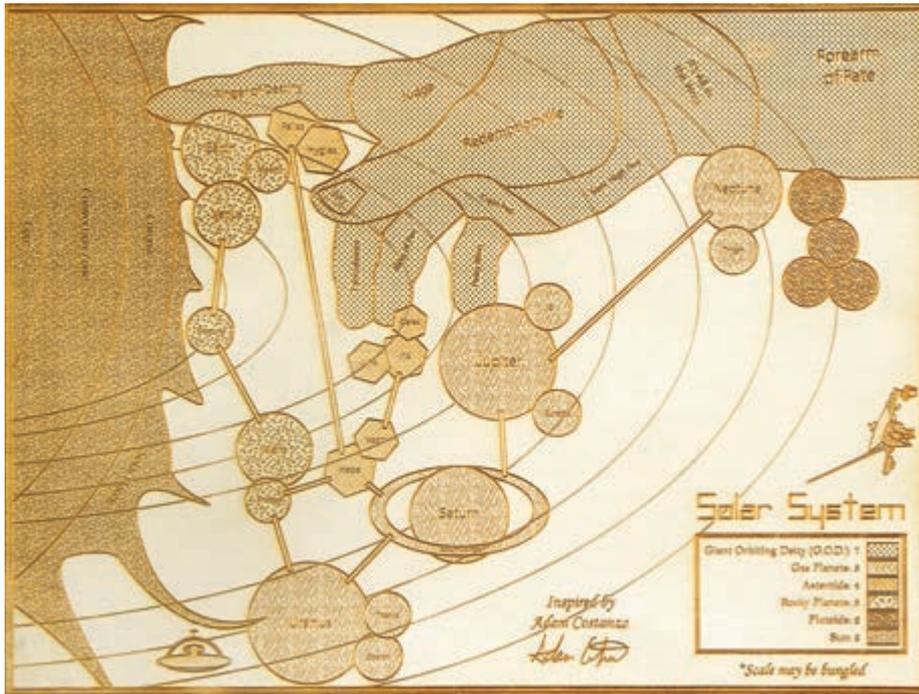
The Boston board was a hit. Soon the two

had created on a home computer game-style maps of the United States, the United Kingdom, and New York City, and arranged for a board game manufacturer to create prototypes of the three boards.

“We can do any map,” says Costanza. In fact, they’ve created designs for 15 game boards so far, among them, boards featuring maps of Washington, D.C., Austin, Texas, Portland, Ore., the solar system, and even the River Campus.

But those with their eyes on Jupiter—or even Wilson Commons—may, at this point, want to consider a laser engraved wooden game board as opposed to standard cardboard.

“The whole idea for Havoc Boards kind of clicked when Luke had the idea of laser engraving,” says Stutzman. It solved a problem of economies of scale. Since each design would require a separate printing run, the only game boards it would make sense



to print on cardboard were those Costanza and Stutzman were confident they could sell in large quantities. Laser engraving on wood provided a means to offer custom boards on demand.

With funds raised from their successful Kickstarter campaign, however, they've been able not only to embark on mass production of the original three prototypes, but also to produce a few additional boards as well.

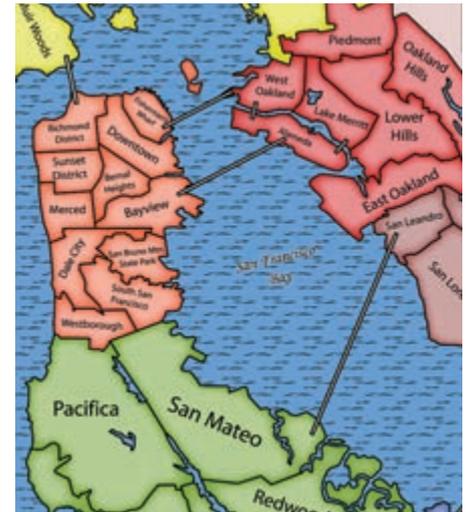
Has Hasbro, the creator of Risk, had anything to say?

"We haven't been contacted," says Costanza. "I'm not sure if we expect to be contacted by them."

Game play, he explains, can't be owned.

Only the name, artwork, or instructions, for example, can be covered by patents and trademarks. He cites the proliferation of Monopoly-style game boards as a precedent. "You can go to Barnes and Noble and find a [Monopoly-style] board for Rochester," says Costanza. "That's not made by Hasbro," which created Monopoly as well as Risk.

But there's a plus to Havoc Boards, Costanza contends. "In Monopoly, the game doesn't really change." With Havoc Boards, "every map is actually a completely different game, because some places have more territory, some have less, some have crazier ways to attack one thing from another." 



**STAR WARS?** Costanza and Stutzman offer a wooden, laser-engraved board for space warriors (top left) as well as traditional boards featuring San Francisco (top right), New York, and other cities.

## Havoc on the River Campus?

How would the two longtime friends and game enthusiasts capture the River Campus? In top-secret strategy sessions, we asked each separately how they would defeat the other.

### Costanza

"If I were playing against Mac, just because I know how to get in his head, I'd pretend that I was going after the liberal arts, just because that's his background and I know that I could really get under his skin by trying to go for Lattimore or Morey.

"But I think my secret plan would be really to go after the engineering buildings. My major was optics, so I was over in that quadrant a lot. And it gives a good

amount of bonus units for the small number of choke points it has. So in essence, if you can control Hutchison Hall, Hopeman, and Hoyt, then you can protect the rest of your engineering buildings just by blocking those three paths.

"And then I'd probably go for the Frederick Douglass building because I used to have many meals there. I'd have to feed my army. I'd have to have supply lines."

### Stutzman

"If I were going against Luke, he's an engineer, so I think he'd go after the engineering buildings. I also know that he likes to start small and really build up.

"So I think I would start big, and I would

go after the residence halls. Specifically Sue B., because I would catch the freshmen unaware. They'd be tripped out from all that homestyle cooking at Danforth, so they'd be an easy target. Meanwhile, Luke would probably have extended out a bit from engineering. I think it would come to a big showdown in the quad."

With the battle raging around him, would President Seligman have anything to worry about?

According to Costanza, maybe not.

"The administration is actually fairly difficult to hold on this map. Their buildings are so spread out. You actually have to hold a good amount of them."



**HIGHEST HONORS:** President Obama presents Rochester alumni Srinivasan (left) and Fleming (right) with national medals.

## Presidential Mettle

Rochester showed its strengths in the sciences and the arts this year as two alumni were awarded national medals. National medals are presented by the President of the United States on behalf of the American people, and are among the highest honors

in the nation for professional achievement.

During a White House ceremony in July, President Barack Obama presented opera soprano **Renee Fleming** '83E (MM), '11 (Honorary) with the National Medal of the Arts. Fleming, often

called the "people's diva," has gained a global audience for her work across genres, from opera to jazz to pop.

In February, **Rangaswamy Srinivasan** '61 (Flw) received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation from President

Obama, also in a White House ceremony. Srinivasan, a physical chemist, made key discoveries as a scientist at IBM Research Center that led directly to the development of laser corrective eye surgery.

## TV Star Power

It's a good year for Yellowjackets to tune into the Emmys. Three alumni are among the nominees for Primetime Emmy Awards, the awards for excellence in television given every fall by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. The awards will be presented during a televised celebration in Los Angeles on September 22.

Comedy writer **Doug Abeles** '81 was nominated for outstanding writing for a variety special. Abeles was a writer for Comedy Central's "Night of Too Many Stars: America Comes Together for Autism Programs," a benefit presentation that aired in October 2012 and featured appearances by Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, Tina Fey, Tracy Morgan, Amy Poehler, and other celebrities.

Abeles, a writer for *Saturday Night Live*, won an Emmy in 2002



**Abeles is a noted comedy writer for *Saturday Night Live*.**

for his work on the late night program.

Composer **Jeff Beal** '85E, a winner of six previous Emmys, was nominated for outstanding music composition for a series, for the theme music of the Netflix political drama series *House of Cards*. Beal composed more than 100 minutes of music for the



**Composer Beal is celebrated for his television theme music.**

television drama, available on a 2-CD soundtrack.

Photo editor **Susan Federman** '83E was nominated for outstanding multicamera picture editing on the CBS comedy series *How I Met Your Mother*. Federman, a winner of two previous Emmys, was the winner of the award in 2012.

## Rocket Man

After weeding through more than 6,000 applications in an 18-month search, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration selected **Josh Cassada** '00 (PhD) as one of a new class of eight astronaut trainees. The trainees have the possibility to join the first human mission to an asteroid and to Mars.

Cassada and the seven other scientists began training in August at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. They join 49 other NASA astronauts.

Cassada, a physicist, is a former Navy test pilot and cofounder and chief technology officer for Quantum Opus, a photonics research firm.

To see a slideshow featuring Cassada and a video, "In Their Own Words: Josh Cassada," visit [www.nasa.gov/astronauts/2013\\_cassada.html](http://www.nasa.gov/astronauts/2013_cassada.html).