



## A MESSAGE FROM INTERIM PRESIDENT

# Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.

I'm sorry to announce that Deirdre Aherne, former Associate Dean of Student Development and Enrollment Management at Hostos, passed away on November 7, 2020. Her time at the College began in 2008 and concluded in 2013. For the last seven years she worked as social activist for a variety of causes, foremost among them climate change.



After retiring from Hostos, "Dee" remained a friend of the College and will be fondly remembered here by her friends and colleagues. She is survived by her partner of 42 years, Marilyn Benetatos. The cause of death was ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease).

The family has requested that people make a donation in Dee's name to 350NYC, a global grassroots network working in over 188 countries to prevent climate catastrophe. Please contribute here: [https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause\\_pdetails/NjYyODI](https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/NjYyODI)

Thinking of Dee, Tino Villanueva's poem "You, If No One Else" came to mind:

Listen, you  
who transformed your anguish  
into healthy awareness,  
put your voice  
where your memory is.  
You who swallowed  
the afternoon dust,  
defend everything you understand  
with words.  
You, if no one else,  
will condemn with your tongue  
the erosion each disappointment brings.

You, who saw the images  
of disgust growing,  
will understand how time  
devours the destitute;  
you, who gave yourself  
your own commandments,  
know better than anyone  
why you turned your back  
on your town's toughest limits.

Don't hush,  
don't throw away  
the most persistent truth,  
as our hard-headed brethren  
sometimes do.  
Remember well  
what your life was like: cloudiness,  
and slick mud  
after a drizzle;  
flimsy windows the wind  
kept rattling  
in winter, and that  
unheated slab dwelling  
where coldness crawled  
up in your clothes.

Tell how you were able to come  
to this point, to unbar  
History's doors  
to see your early years,  
your people, the others.  
Name the way  
rebellion's calm spirit has served you,  
and how you came  
to unlearn the lessons  
of that teacher,  
your land's omnipotent defiler.

**Office of the President  
Hostos Community College**

475 Grand Concourse, A-Building, Room 341, Bronx, NY 10451  
718-518-4300 | [PRESIDENTSOFFICE@hostos.cuny.edu](mailto:PRESIDENTSOFFICE@hostos.cuny.edu)

