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## **Celebrating Brooklyn: Regina Myer to Deliver Address at City Tech's June 3 Commencement**

Brooklyn, NY—May 21, 2019—City Tech (New York City College of Technology) will mark the annual rite of passage for graduating students at its 79<sup>th</sup> Commencement Exercises on Monday, June 3, beginning at 6:30 p.m., at the Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn.

President Russell K. Hotzler is expected to confer degrees to over 3,000 graduates this year, making this one of the largest graduating classes in City Tech history. Approximately half of these will be receiving bachelor's degrees, marking the progress of City Tech as a senior college.

Delivering the commencement address will be Regina Myer, President of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, a not-for-profit local development corporation. Myer previously served as President of Brooklyn Bridge Park Corp. and drove the mission to plan, construct and maintain the park, a waterfront oasis that stretches 1.3 miles along Brooklyn's East River shoreline.

The top two students in the 2019 graduating class are Valedictorian Elizabeth Ferreira Pichardo, who earned a baccalaureate degree in computer engineering, and Salutatorian Lital Deutsh, who earned a baccalaureate in law and paralegal studies.

### **Regina Myer, Commencement Speaker**

Regina Myer is President of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, a not-for-profit local development corporation. The Partnership serves as the primary champion for Downtown Brooklyn as a world-class business, cultural, educational, residential and retail destination. Until October 2016, she served as President of Brooklyn Bridge Park, transforming 85 acres of formerly industrial waterfront into a vibrant open space that welcomes millions of visitors per year. Myer led the mission to plan, construct and maintain the sustainable waterfront park that stretches 1.3 miles along Brooklyn's East River shoreline, creating a recreational, environmental and cultural attraction enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

Prior to Brooklyn Bridge Park, Regina was senior vice president for planning and design at the Hudson Yards Development Corporation. Earlier, she was Brooklyn Borough Director for the New York City Planning Department, where she directed the comprehensive redevelopment of the Greenpoint/Williamsburg waterfront, the rezoning of Downtown Brooklyn for high-density office and residential development, and numerous neighborhood rezoning efforts.

She received her BA and Master's degrees in Urban Planning from the University of Michigan, and resides in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

The College is proud to have her join its 79<sup>th</sup> Commencement Exercises.

### **Elizabeth Ferreira Pichardo, Valedictorian**

Elizabeth Ferreira Pichardo was born in the Dominican Republic, where she lived with her family until moving to America a little over five years ago to pursue the American Dream. Elizabeth's first few years adapting to a new culture were quite difficult, yet she persevered, citing the excitement of endless possibilities as her constant motivator. After working for a year in order to support her family, Elizabeth was finally able to attend college in the United States, a dream of hers for many years.

Elizabeth's love for technology led her to pursue a degree in computer engineering at City Tech. Her first semester was extremely challenging because of her minimal knowledge of the English language, as well as the technical terminology used in her classes. Nonetheless, she was determined to succeed. By her second semester, things started looking up and she was accepted into the ASAP Program at the College, which gave her the support she needed to achieve her goals. One of those goals was being awarded the prestigious Women in Technology (WiTNY) scholarship, which allowed her to contribute to the community by teaching, guiding and mentoring children of different ages and backgrounds.

In her second year of college, Elizabeth broke her ankle. A year later, she was devastatingly diagnosed with an incurable medical condition. Although she never thought it would be possible, with help from her family and friends, Elizabeth was able to overcome this emotional trauma and pursue her dreams. She now regularly volunteers with organizations that help the disabled and terminally ill.

Since she was young, Elizabeth has dreamed of helping others by bringing them together through technology. She lives by this quote from Benjamin Franklin: "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I might remember. Involve me and I learn."

Elizabeth's passion and determination have allowed her to achieve the highest academic award offered by the New York City College of Technology. On Monday, June 3, she will graduate with a 3.92 grade point average and a bachelor's degree in computer engineering technology. She will be honored at Barclays Center as Valedictorian of the graduating class at City Tech's 79<sup>th</sup> commencement ceremonies.

In the future, she plans to pursue a master's in software engineering and philosophy with the goal of unifying society through technology and inspiring women to pursue careers in STEM.

## **Lital Deutsh, Salutatorian**

Lital Deutsh has a strong voice that needs to be heard.

She grew up keeping her difficult home life a secret, valuing silence in a way that created an obstacle between her and her dreams. That silence eventually spiraled into full fledged agoraphobia. For two years Lital rarely left her apartment, unable to contend with her illness.

Searching for support, Lital found activist friends who listened to her voice even when it was a whisper. With their encouragement and love they taught her how to overcome her difficulties and become part of the world again. Learning to speak up was part of Lital's convalescence. Soon, Lital realized that she wanted to use her voice the way her friends did, to speak up for those who couldn't speak for themselves.

Lital soon realized that college could expose her to new ideas and the knowledge necessary to use her voice for change. She decided to enter the Law and Paralegal program at City Tech, which showed her how to make the right kind of noise to create the strongest change possible.

While in the program, she joined the Faculty Student Disciplinary Committee, where she saw firsthand how impactful her decisions could be. She also became a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success and started working at the prestigious law firm of WilmerHale, where she has received two Recognition Awards for her work with Sanctuary for Families, an organization that assists victims of domestic abuse.

On Monday, June 3, Lital Deutsh will graduate from City Tech with a Bachelor's degree in Law and Paralegal Studies. Her involvement in the life of the College and surrounding communities, coupled with her 4.0 grade point average, led to her selection as Salutatorian for the graduating class of 2019.

In the future, Lital plans to use her voice for the less advantaged by working with corporations to create programs that will effect change in our communities. Among the countless communities in need of help, her focuses are the plight homeless LGBTQ youth who cannot be heard over their homelessness and domestic abuse victims who often live in silence.

This summer, she was chosen to participate in the prestigious New Leadership New York Institute, which gives women interested in public policy the chance to meet with local and international policymakers. She hopes this will be a great start for her career in corporate social responsibility or anti-money laundering, with plans to eventually become an expert in either field and help create legislation to benefit those vulnerable groups she so strongly supports.

If all goes well, we may just be seeing Lital in Washington someday!

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**About City Tech (New York City College of Technology)** City Tech, of The City University of New York, is the largest four-year public college of technology in the Northeast and a national model for technological education. City Tech has an enrollment of more than 17,000 students in 29 baccalaureate and 27 associate degree programs and was recently ranked ninth among more than 2,000 U.S. institutions in overall economic mobility for its students ([www.opportunityinsights.org](http://www.opportunityinsights.org)). For more information, visit [www.citytech.cuny.edu](http://www.citytech.cuny.edu).

**Photos:**

#1 – Elizabeth Ferreira Pichardo, Valedictorian

#2 – Lital Deutsh, Salutatorian

**Photo credits:**

Alberto Vargas