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Graphic Credit: Samantha Castro

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GoFundMe Reaches $10,000 For Burial Costs Of Beloved BC Faculty Member



RESPECT - Jankelewicz was the Philosophy Department Office Manager./Brooklyn College

By Dayanara Analuisa

The Brooklyn College Philosophy Department held a fundraiser to cover burial costs for Brooklyn College faculty member Jay Jankelewicz, who died from COVID-19 complications earlier this month.

As the office manager for the Philosophy Department, Jankelewicz was described as having a friendly personality by his peers, and a passion for helping people before he died on April 9.

"Jay was my boss but he was also my dear friend for the past six years," said Christina Weinbaum, an adjunct professor and one of the organizers of the fundraiser. "This loss was really heartbreaking for me and I wanted to do everything I could to help his parents immediately. The Philosophy Department has been united as a collective to do everything we can."

Jankelewicz's family needed help raising the money in their time of need, Weinbaum said. There were two fundraisers, one to cover Jankelewicz's funeral and another to cover his burial costs.

"They do not have a lot of money, and without Jay, are struggling to make ends meet," Weinbaum said.

While the goal for the funeral cost couldn't be reached, the goal for the burial costs were more than met. Not only did they meet their goal of $5,000 in a couple of days but raised over twice the amount. Soon after they exceeded the amount to that the total that the amount would be for the whole family.

One donor, who goes by the name Christine, donated $200 with a message, "Jay was the best - I think I put that in every email I sent to him, because it was true. What loss of such a truly good human being."

As a student, Jankelewicz was a Presidential Scholar, a member of the Marketing Society and the Computer Science Society. Starting as a college assistant in 2012 at Brooklyn College, Jankelewicz was named employee of the month in June 2019. The Brooklyn College community united in memory of Jankelewicz not only in the forms of fundraisers but in meaningful tweets.

"Jay loved working in the Phil. dept," Associate professor at Brooklyn College Business department, Veronica Manlow tweeted. "He told me how much he liked the professors and students. He made sacrifices for his family-turned down a masters scholarship to help support them."

Another gofundme recently went up, but this time in efforts to raise money for the funeral costs of Jay's father, Howard Jankelewicz, who died on April 20.

BC Virtual Celebration Causes Divide And Confusion Among Graduating Class Of 2020



MIX UP - Though the college will hold a virtual ceremony, an in-person commencement is still indefinitely postponed./Brooklyn College

By Samantha Castro

Brooklyn College will host a virtual celebration for the 2020 graduating class on May 28 called "Cheers to Class of 2020," BC President Michelle Anderson announced on Wednesday.

Anderson wrote that the celebration will include "music, speeches, special messages from College faculty and staff, and an announcement of each graduate's name and degree, featuring their photograph." She made an important note that "this is not a replacement ceremony" and "nothing can replace an in person commencement."

However, right after that she wrote, "Given the uncertainties of the pandemic, though, we cannot say when we might be able to host an in person celebration. For now, we will work hard to make our virtual graduation very special."

Commencement has been a hot topic among the graduating class since the closing of all City University of New York schools. But, Anderson's announcement seemed to cause confusion among the BC community rather than clarification.

Business major, Md Ahsan Zahid, shared a petition on the Brooklyn College In The Know 2 Facebook page to cancel the virtual celebration, and instead work on a postponed in person graduation. Many students in the comments section pointed out that the email never said that the commencement was canceled, and that the president stated that the virtual one isn't a replacement. But, one student shared a different point of view.

"I know the email said this wasn't a 'replacement' ceremony but I really am not holding out much hope," said student and youth studies major, Floralisa Ortega. "It feels like they're just gonna throw us a virtual ceremony just to say they did something and then forget it."

Another soon to be graduate John Carlos Rodriguez replied "that's the problem with you and most of the BC population: losing hope. Just be patient and be positive. Maybe the president is planning a real graduation as she said it would."

The conversation continued when Dapo Ibrahim, one of the candidates for the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Student Government President, shared BC's facebook post about Anderson's update in the Facebook group.

"We sincerely appreciate the gesture but the truth is, there should be an actual in person Ceremony to celebrate our graduating students once the crisis is over!" Ibrahim wrote.

A fellow graduate, Joeline Allsop, has been vocal about the in-person commencement being postponed and not cancelled. When an alumni wrote in the comments that the school should plan an in-person graduation once the pandemic settles she responded, "That's been the plan from the jump. Students just refuse to read or take account of the fact that we're in the middle of a global pandemic."

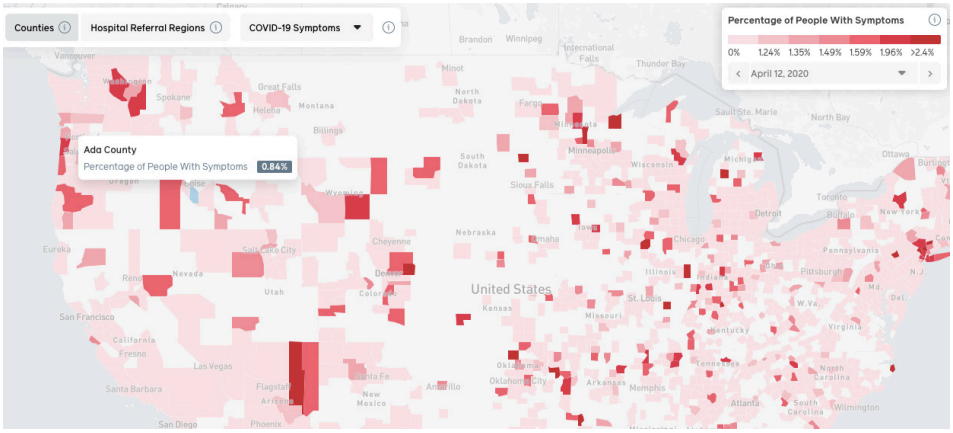
One long debate on the Facebook page stemmed from a post made by Deena Attal, a student who was concerned, rather than relieved, after reading Anderson's original message about graduation on April 6. In the message, Anderson relayed the CUNY Chancellor's message that all CUNY spring 2020 commencement ceremonies will be indefinitely postponed.

The student, along with other students in the comments section, were under the impression that because of the planning of the virtual celebration and the non-existent date of the future in-person celebration that there might be no in-person commencement at all.

However, other students like Rodriguez and Allsop emphasized that the commencement is only postponed and not cancelled. Also, they argued by repeating what was mentioned in the Chancellor's update: it's difficult to pick dates because of the uncertainty of the pandemic.

"They will have a celebration for us all, but it's kinda stupid to think they can concretely plan for the event when nothing is settled," wrote Allsop in the comments section. "We deserve a commencement, but I rather not kill grandma because I just had to wear a cap and gown."

Facebook Launches Heat Map That Shows Self-Reported COVID-19 Symptoms



DATA - Rockland County had the most self-reported symptons of COVID-19./Facebook

By Nicholas Williams

Facebook launched an interactive county by county heat map on Monday that shows an estimated percentage of people with COVID-19 and flu symptoms.

Facebook partnered with Carnegie Mellon University Delphi Research Center to set up surveys asking people on Google and Facebook to self-report their symptoms. The survey asks people in the United States a range of questions relating to what symptoms they have, loss of smell, fever, coughing or shortness of breath.

The map shows counties that have a large percentage of reported COVID-19 symptoms in dark red, while those with a small percentage are pink.

"We're deeply appreciative of the help we are receiving from Facebook, Google and our other partners," co-leader of the CMU Delphi Research Group Roni Rosenfeld said. "The data they provide is priceless and will give us greater confidence once we are able to begin our forecasts for this deadly disease."

With the ongoing pandemic hitting first responders and health care workers hard, Facebook is utilizing their audience of two billion users to help create a forecast for hospitals with real-time data of possible COVID-19 cases, so that they can be better prepared with supplies to help the sick.

"This forecasting problem is so complicated that we believe that a diversity of data and approaches is our best weapon,"co-leader of Carnegie Mellon's Delphi COVID-19 Response Team Ryan Tibshirani said.

"Better data can help governments determine where to send resources such as ventilators and personal protective equipment — and eventually which areas are safe to start opening up again," Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said in an OP-ED to the Washington Post.

Their first map went up Monday, and over one million anonymous users responded to the survey. Surveys will start to hit Facebook user's timelines each day for the upcoming weeks.

"Getting accurate county-by-county data from across the United States is challenging, and obtaining such focused data from across the whole world is even harder. But with a community of billions of people globally, Facebook can uniquely help researchers and health authorities get the information they need to respond to the outbreak and start planning for the recovery," Zuckerberg added.

Zuckerberg also aimed to work with other research groups to expand the project beyond the United States.

According to the map in New York City, based on data from April 12, around 1.96 percent of people in Kings County reported COVID-19 symptoms.

In New York State, Rockland County had reported the highest percentage of people with symptoms at 4.4%.

BC Alum Hosts New Music-Based Podcast "Sound Table"

By Bryan Davis

Brooklyn College music students and alumni started a new podcast called "Sound Table" to combat the cancellation of public gatherings and the campus closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The podcast features interviews and discussions about the current music scene, and it is hosted by Simon Brown, a BC alumnus, and the artistic director of the Brooklyn Composers' Collective. The collective is run by Marcello Di Russo, and it is part of the Conservatory at Brooklyn College.

The podcast was created as a direct response to the coronavirus. Plus, Brown and Russo wanted to work on a project off campus anyways so the two can continue working together after Di Russo graduates.

"We can't do concerts anymore, so we have to have a podcast," said Brown. "The podcast is mainly interviews with composers, and we're working on a bunch more and talking to up and coming composers, visual artists, poetics, other composers, and just music business people."

In the first podcast episode, Brown interviewed Morton Subotnick, a composer of electronic music, who teaches at Brooklyn College.

"The interviews are pretty valuable," he said. Brown mentioned that he was able to talk about topics with Subotnick that aren't in other interviews.

Brown hopes to continue on with the podcast, through the COVID-19 pandemic. He said he would possibly add a co-host in the future. Both would interview a guest, and follow up with current news happening in the world of music.

"There's a bunch of people we definitely want to talk to, and talk about their Brooklyn College roots, and how that helped them," he said.

"Sound Table" is out on various podcast platforms, including Spotify. To keep up with the Brooklyn Composers' Collective, follow them on Instagram at @brooklyncomposerscollective and on Twitter at @BCComposers.



The podcast is on spotify./Sound Table

Florida Rapper YNW Melly Denied Jail Release After Testing Positive For COVID-19



DENIED - YNW Melly was turned down after requesting jail release despite testing positve for COVID-19./Getty Images

By Oba Williams-Cantine

Florida rapper YNW Melly revealed that he tested positive for COVID-19 while awaiting his double murder trial, but was denied release from prison after his legal team made an appeal on April 2.

The rapper, whose real name is Jamell Demons, was denied by a judge at Broward County Jail, who claimed that Demons has to make a request for medical treatment with the Sheriff's Office of Broward County, and will not be allowed to seek medical treatment on his own.

According to a written statement given to Pitchfork by the Broward Sheriff's Office, they said, "BSO follows the Florida Department of Health and CDC guidelines in regards to the testing of inmates. Inmates who test positive are medically isolated, treated and monitored in accordance with the Florida Department of Health and CDC guidelines.

If an inmate who has tested positive shows signs of acute symptoms he or she will be transferred to a hospital."

The same day that Demons' team made an appeal for his medical release, the family of YNW Juvy filed a motion in court that opposed Melly's medical release from jail. Demons was charged with murdering YNW Juvy, whose real name is Christopher Thomas Jr. and another YNW member, Anthony Williams, known as YNW Sakchaser. Demons' lawyer Bradford Cohen argued that Broward County Jail would provide "inadequate care and protection" putting Melly at risk of dying from the virus.

According to a recent article published by XXL, Melly has been treated with Gatorade and Tylenol to combat his worsening condition. Sources close to the rapper say that he is suffering from "labored breathing, body aches, and headaches."

Unlike in Melly's situation, other correctional facilities around the country have begun the process of releasing inmates, in an effort to cut down on the spread of COVID-19.

New York rapper Takashi 6ix9ine was sent home early to serve out the last two months of his two year sentence while under house arrest. Similar to Melly, 6ix9ines asthma makes him incredibly susceptible to catching Coronavirus.

The state of Florida has the third largest prison system in the country, according to the state Department of Corrections, with 96,000 inmates in 2018. The agency reported Wednesday that more than 42 inmates had tested positive for the coronavirus, and the The Department of Health said there are more than 20,000 cases across Florida, and more than 600 people have died.

In March, Florida released a total of 164 inmates from Hillsborough County Jail and Orient Road Jail in Tampa.

"Judges, prosecutors, and sheriffs around the country are facing difficult decisions during this health crisis with respect to balancing public health and public safety," Sheriff Chad Chronister of Hillsborough County said to the New York Times."Sheriffs in Florida and throughout our country have released nonviolent, low-level offenders to protect our deputies and the jail population from an outbreak."

Demons' alleged involvement in the double murder of two YNW members means that he is probably not a "low-level offender."

Recently, in a now-deleted tweet, YNW Melly reached out to Kanye West on Twitter saying "@kanyewest need your help DM." Kanye has yet to respond.

"The Last Dance" Documentary Highlights 1980s Chicago Bulls' Drug Problem



"COCAINE CIRCUS" - Jordan walked in on his teammates doing drugs./Getty Images

By Jose Rohdin

The ESPN documentary "The Last Dance" has been a hit in the sports community, with Sunday's first two episodes garnering 6.1 million views.

The illuminating documentary gave us insight into Michael Jordan's life that we have never had before. This has come at a time of need for sports fans, as basically all sports games have been canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Joe Leo, former WBCR Sports Director said, "I feel my reaction to it is due to the fact that there are no live sports, but I absolutely loved the documentary. It might be the best sports documentary."

One story in the documentary that has stood out to fans was Jordan's anecdote about drug use by the Chicago Bulls when he was drafted in 1984.

Jordan was asked if he ever saw an article that called the Bulls a "traveling cocaine circus." Jordan let out a massive laugh and proceeded to tell a story about his rookie year.

"I had one event, preseason, I think we were in Peoria," Jordan recalled. "It was in a hotel, so I'm trying to find my teammates. So I start knocking on doors. I get to this one door, and I knock on the door, and I can hear someone says, 'shh, someone's outside.' And then you hear this deep voice, someone says, 'who is it?' I said 'MJ.'"

"So they open up the door. I walk in, and practically the whole team was in there. And it was like, things I've never seen in my life as a young kid. You got your lines [of cocaine] over here, you got your weed smokers over here, you got your women over here. So the first thing I said, 'Look man, I'm out.' Because all I could think about was if they come and raid this place, right about now, I'm just as guilty as everybody else that's in this room. And from that point on, I was more or less on my own."

The Bulls prior to drafting Jordan was one of the worst teams in the league, only having a 23-55 record in the 1983-1984 season. This gave fans a look at what Jordan was dealing with off the court when he first arrived on a struggling Bulls team. The use of drugs and the party scene of the early 1980s became a problem in the NBA.

Chris Cobbs of The Washington Post wrote an article back in August 1980, titled "Widespread Cocaine Use by Players Alarms NBA." It went into detail about players, coaches, and front office members who have seen or heard about drug use by NBA players.

"Although there are no reliable figures on the use of cocaine by players, estimates by people in the game range from 40 percent to 75 percent," Cobbs wrote.

Frank Layden, general manager of the Utah Jazz at the time, was quoted saying, "There is not a team in the league you can confidently say does not have a drug problem. Every team could benefit from a rehabilitation program. I had two (drug) cases out of 11 players last year. We need a place to send these people (for help)."

Most players declined to be interviewed for Cobb's story, but former guard for the Seattle SuperSonics Paul Westphal estimated that 50% of players were using cocaine at the time. Another unnamed player who had recently left the league said that 75% of players were using the drug.

"It's like drinking water. You 'hit the blow' (sniff cocaine) to be sociable," the anonymous player said.

This was Jordan's reality of his rookie year, and he chose to shy away from it. Former teammate Rod Higgins commented about Jordan to CBS Sports. He said, "Whatever somebody else might've been doing off the court, whether it was partying or whatever, that wasn't part of what he was doing. Orange juice and 7-Up, that was his go-to [drink]."

This only adds to Jordan's legacy, as he was able to overcome his environment, knowing what he had to do to be great. He was able to be on a team that had many off-court agendas and an on-court losing mentality, but still turned the Bulls into a winning organization.

Jordan, in his rookie year, would turn the franchise around and lift them into the playoffs, where they would end up losing to the Milwaukee Bucks in the first round.

Times have changed, and the NBA has cracked down on drug use by its players. NBC Sports reported: "In the NBA today, it's a lot harder to get away with a scene like this because of the Anti-Drug Program where players are tested throughout the season. According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, players are to six random, unannounced drug tests during the season and offseason."

Got tips? Stories?

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Email
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with all your questions and comments!