

# Distinguished Alumna Encourages Bronx Freshmen to Complete, Succeed

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Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished Alumna and Pulitzer Prize-winner Mirta Ojito, who credits her community college and Society membership for helping her achieve success, was the keynote speaker at the recent Freshman Convocation at the Bronx Community College, City University of New York.



Leonardo Minier, Phi Theta Kappa chapter vice president, welcomes Mirta Ojito.

Ojito, now an assistant professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in New York City, spoke on her life in her native Cuba under the Castro regime, and how she and her family came to the United States 1980 on the Mariel boatlift. Enrolling in Miami Dade College and becoming a member of the Omicron Tau Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa helped realize her dream of becoming a journalist, she has said.

After graduating from Miami Dade College, Ojito transferred to Florida Atlantic University on a Phi Theta Kappa scholarship and received her master's degree from Columbia University. She is author of *Finding Manana*, a memoir of her childhood in Cuba, the Mariel boatlift and her life in the U.S.

Ojito worked as a reporter for *The Miami Herald* and *El Nuevo Herald* before joining *The New York Times*, where she shared the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting for the series "How Race is Lived in America." Ojito was named Phi Theta Kappa's Distinguished Alumna in 2006, and currently serves as a Trustee of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation. [Hear her talk about the benefits of Phi Theta Kappa membership here](#) (English and Spanish versions).

Officers Sharon Chin and Leonardo Minier of the Lambda Nu Chapter at Bronx Community College presented Ojito with flowers and a framed Phi Theta Kappa Golden Key.



Phi Theta Kappa chapter president Sharon Chin, left, and Mirta Ojito.

Chin, Phi Theta Kappa chapter president, is active in the college's Inter-Organizational Council, Relay For Life, AIDS Walk, Autism Speaks and other service groups. She received the Bronx CUNY Community and Campus Engagement Scholarship. Chin is seeking an Associate Degree in Applied Sciences as a Medical Office Assistant and plans to study for a Master's Degree in Public Health.

Minier, chapter vice president, came to the United States from the Dominican Republic and moved to NYC with his parents at the age of four. He was one of two BCC Students chosen for the 2011 Cohort of Kaplan Leadership Foundation Scholars. Minier is majoring in Engineering Science and plans a career as a builder of environmentally friendly and safe structures.

After the convocation Ojito met with chapter advisor Yvonne P. Erazo-Davila and chapter members.