

**For Immediate Release
May 16, 2024**

**MEDIA ADVISORY
Photo, B-Roll, VOSOT & PKG Opportunity
Thursday, May 30, 2024—10 a.m.**

**LEHMAN COLLEGE STUDENTS RISE ‘ALL THE WAY UP’ AT COMMENCEMENT
CEREMONY**

Fat Joe and J.E. Franklin to Receive Honorary Degrees

WHO: Fat Joe and J.E. Franklin
WHAT: Lehman College 2024 Commencement
WHERE: Lehman College, South Field
250 Bedford Park Blvd West
WHEN: Thursday, May 30 at 10 a.m.

The Bronx, NY—Wielding the power of the pen, Fat Joe’s verses have scripted The Bronx’s story onto the pages of Hip-Hop history. On May 30, 2024, more than 3,100 graduates of Lehman College will hear from the Hip Hop legend and entrepreneur as they set off to write the next chapter of their lives.

Joining Fat Joe in receiving an honorary degree is American playwright, educator, and activist **J. E. Franklin** best known for her ground-breaking play “Black Girl” (1969). The impact of her work and storytelling come full circle as she returns to the school where she once inspired young minds as a Lehman professor.

“This year’s honorary degree recipients serve as living examples of the difference one can make beyond their chosen fields,” said Fernando Delgado, Lehman College President. “As our students get ready to embark on their own journeys, let this be a reminder that success is more than personal and professional achievements; it’s also the change you create for others and the indelible mark you leave on this world. Congratulations to the class of 2024.”

Adding to the celebration, and for the first time in the College’s history, the names of all graduating students will be called out as they walk across the stage to receive their diplomas.

Lehman’s Class of 2024 is spread across six schools, including the second graduating cohorts of both the School of Business and Doctor of Nursing Practice program. Among the graduates is Yarys Lopez, a political science major whose resilience and determination were key factors in helping her family thrive after fleeing race-based violence in Honduras. She now works with the New York Legal Assistance Group to help families and new immigrants like herself.

Khea Ireland, an international student from Belize, will graduate with a degree in speech pathology and plans to continue her studies in Lehman's graduate speech-language pathology program so she can bring critical services to her community back home, where there are few practitioners. Ireland's two sisters are also Lehman students. The graduate address will be delivered by Alicia Rodriguez-Allie. A political science major who was born in Puerto Rico, she is first-generation college student. She is active in student life and has served as a senator in the Student Government Association. The Commencement ceremony will be available to stream live on the 2024 Commencement [page](#).

Members of the media are invited to capture footage of the entire ceremony, including interviews with event organizers, faculty, and students and family members.

Contact: Mercedes Diez

Director, Communications & College Relations

Mercedes.Diez@lehman.cuny.edu

917-213-4836

About Lehman College

A perennial national leader in promoting social mobility, Lehman College of The City University of New York serves as an intellectual, economic, and cultural center for the Bronx, New York City, and beyond. The college - which sits on a tree-lined 37-acre campus – supports more than 13,000 undergraduate and graduate students, another 14,000 students in continuing and professional programs, and over 90,000 alumni. As a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution in the Bronx, Lehman College educates a diverse population of students. The college offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees as well as certificate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professions.

About Fat Joe

Fat Joe is a Grammy-nominated recording artist who has been involved in various philanthropic efforts and community initiatives in his hometown. With an acclaimed four-decade career, he has made a positive impact on the community through numerous donations and fundraisers.

About J. E. Franklin

Jennie Elizabeth Franklin, known as J. E. Franklin, is an American playwright best known for her ground-breaking play "Black Girl" (1969). Franklin penned Black Girl in 1969 as a response to the Moynihan Report, which linked Black poverty to Black matriarchy. Initially commissioned for television, it received critical acclaim and was later staged and directed by Shauneille Perry at the New Federal Theatre. A trailblazer in the

world of theatre, Franklin joined Lehman College as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Education, moving into a full-time faculty role in 1970. She taught at Lehman until 1975. During this time, she wrote several plays for Lehman students, published notable anthologies, and received numerous awards and fellowships for her contributions to the dramatic arts.