

Restaurant Team Doubles Down On Slain Owner's Drive to Succeed

by Milford Prewitt

Despite his cool demeanor and soft-spoken speech, one could tell that Rick Young was very proud about his newest venture, Taste of Brooklyn. The pride oozed out of Young though he tried his best to restrain himself.

A restaurant that fuses Southern soul with Caribbean cooking and food traditions, TOB made Young beam like a father of a new child. With hardly a word of advertising and a soft opening, TOB would enjoy word-of-mouth kudos from neighbors, high marks in the blogosphere, and steady walk-in traffic. The signature dish is unlike anything to be found in Prospect Lefferts Gardens: carrot cake waffles with fried chicken.

Arguably the slickest looking restaurant in the area, it boasts rich wooden accents, high banquettes, and tall dining tables. The eye-catching centerpiece—Young didn't need to point out—is the 500-gallon aquarium suspended over a large wooden communal table.

What Young was also proud of but didn't boast about was how much his kitchen crew and front-of-the-house staff—folks who had never worked together, in the main—were working as a team to make a go of the place.

"I've been around start-ups in club business and retail in the past and I know how hard it is to get strangers to trust one another," he said. "Especially when it relates to everyone pulling their own weight. There're no slackers here."

That conversation with the *Echo* was three weeks before the wee hours of Friday, September 4, when Young would drive himself to the emergency room of Kings County Hospital with a single bullet wound in his left torso, according to Nicole Nicholas, the restaurant's general manager.

He had been shot while parking his car in reverse on Rogers Avenue, in front of his home, cater-corner from the restaurant.

A lifelong resident and entrepreneur of PLG who relished the prospect of capitalizing on the neighborhood's rising affluence thanks to gentrification, Young would die from his wounds at the hospital that morning at the age of 37.

Despite having "solid leads," police have no suspects or a motive. "There's a lot we can't say in public," says the 71st Precinct's community affairs officer, Detective Vincent Martinos. "But this was not a random act. We believe he was targeted."

If you have information the police could use, call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-577-TIPS.

Although the restaurant closed for several days after Mr. Young's death in mournful respect, ownership is now in the hands of his wife, Selia Young, a professional event planner.

Chef Kay McArthur-Vincze, who was married at TOB in October, says the crew has rallied around Selia and general manager Nicholas, to fulfill Young's hope that the restaurant will thrive. (Some PLG restaurant-goers may remember chef Kay, a culinary graduate from The Art Institute of Charlotte, N.C., as a former night bartender at Gino's on Flatbush. "I've always wanted to be a chef," she said, weeks before her boss's death. "This is a great opportunity for me.")

"We're working together, very hard, in memory of Rick," Kay says. "We're bringing in new ideas for the menu and we're going to keep going. We have to do well and get it right. He had kids."

Mr. Young had told the *Echo* that in many ways he was carrying on an 80-year-old tradition by establishing a restaurant and bar at the location. He said property research he had conducted revealed that the building had continuously been an eating place or a bar—usually an Irish bar—since 1934. And since the 1960s, he added, the establishments had been continuously black owned.



Rick Young, the late owner of Taste of Brooklyn.

BLACK POPULATION FALLS BY MORE THAN 2,000

New Census Study Finds a Wealthier, Whiter, Younger PLG

by Milford Prewitt

What longtime residents see from a brief stroll along Flatbush Avenue or infer from recent million-dollar-plus house sales in the Lefferts Manor Historic District, the U.S. Census Bureau is confirming: Prospect Lefferts Gardens is growing richer, whiter and younger.

While the fruits of gentrification are leading to new housing starts, surging home resale values and a blossoming of new restaurants and retail options along Flatbush and Rogers Avenues, more than 2,000 black people won't be sharing in the bounty. That is the number of black residents who have left the neighborhood or died between 2010 and 2013.

The American Community Survey for 2013 says black residents are still the neighborhood's predominant racial group by far—accounting for seven of every ten residents. But blacks of all income groups are saying goodbye to PLG.

The survey is an update—estimates based mainly on demographic projections and statistical forecasting—the Census Bureau conducts every year following each decade's decennial national headcount. In this case, the bureau used the 2010 Census from five years ago. It based its report on the nine census tracts (up by one tract from the 2010 Census) that roughly conform to PLG's traditional borders. Those borders are Prospect Park to New York Avenue, west to east; and Empire Boulevard to Parkside Avenue, north to south.

Figures for 2013 are the most current available. The 2014 data won't be available until the summer of 2016.

Slight Population Growth

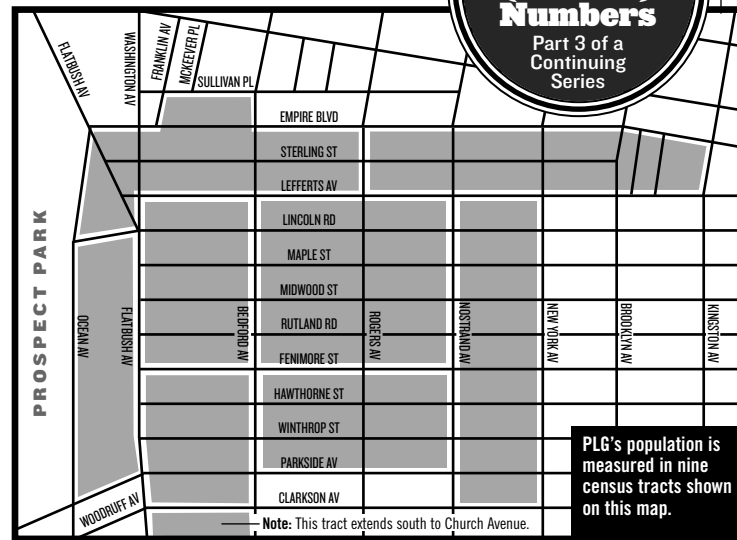
Despite all the new faces PLG old-timers are likely to see when catching the subway, shopping locally or warming bar stools, the neighborhood's population hardly grew in 2013. Total population growth was up less than a fraction of 1 percent, from 37,683 persons in 2010, to 37,699 in 2013.

Although blacks made up nearly 71 percent of the total population here, 2,132 of them left the neighborhood in the three years, 2010-13. Black residential population dropped 7 percent, from 28,828 to 26,696. Their declining population was the only racial group to decrease.

The white population grew 34 percent between 2010 and 2013, from 3,919 to 5,264.

Like the white population, PLG's Hispanic population also grew by double-digit percentages, up 18 percent in 2013 to 3,985. The Asian community grew as well, to 857, an 8 percent increase, during the same three-year time frame.

One modest contributor to account for some of the slide in the black population may be the fact that there were fewer households in PLG in 2013. Total households fell by 384, a 2.5 percent drop to 14,867, from 15,251 in the 2010 Census.



But given the scores of new residential units that will be pumped into the pipeline in the next one-to-two years, the decline in overall households is bound to reverse itself.

Rich Houses, Poor Houses

That rich people are coveting the century-plus old homes in the Manor and adjoining streets and paying record-breaking prices with nearly every new sale is a laurel for the neighborhood and a boon for the sellers. But stark differences in the neighborhood's household incomes, where families on government assistance can live on the same block as judges, major league baseball umpires, corporate attorneys, and Wall Street wheeler-dealers, is creating another kind of diversity.

According to the Survey, one of the fastest rising income groups in PLG in 2013 was households earning \$200,000 a year or more. They were up 36 percent, to 308 households.

The very poor—determined by New York's poverty income level of less than \$23,830 for a family of four or \$11,890 for an individual—declined.

In 2010, households earning \$25,000 to \$30,000 numbered 1,118. They declined more than 20 percent in 2013, to 888. But it's unclear how to view that trend given that wages and salaries have hardly increased since the end of the Great Recession.

Did those families make more money and move into a higher income group or did they leave the neighborhood?

In August, the Center for Economic Opportunity, using the same Survey numbers, reported that nearly half of all city residents—45.6 percent—are living near poverty and that the city's Asian population has surpassed Hispanics as the city's poorest group. Moreover, the CEO reported that 74,000 people fell into poverty in the past three years.

The findings about middle-income household ranges in PLG showed a mix. Households earning \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year increased 66.3 percent, to 1,384. But households that reported \$100,000 to \$124,000 incomes declined 7.7 percent since 2010, to 746 households.

(continued on page 2)

New PLG Web Series Hits Home with Working Parents

Tiny cramped apartments strewn with toys, little privacy from curious kids, and, ah yes...lice. These are just a few of the many annoyances Brooklyn parents will find familiar and funny in the new online comedy, "47 Secrets to a Younger You."

The show is written and created by PLG residents Laura Frenzer, founder and former executive director of PLG Arts, and Rohana Kenin, former PLG Arts board member and theatre director. The duo brought six seasons of Shakespeare to Prospect Park with PLG Arts from 2006-2012.

The title, "47 Secrets..." mocks the endless stream of self-help books, talk shows, advice columns, and blogs that are aimed at women, particularly women hitting middle age.

Laura and Rohana shared with us some aspects of creating their newest venture.

You worked together for many years producing the local family theatre hit "Daydream" in Prospect Park. What made you decide to switch from live Shakespeare to indie TV?

FRENZER: We loved producing "Daydream" and will always be very proud of bringing that show to over 7,000 kids of all ages. But it was time for something just for parents.

KENIN: We wanted to tell stories that came from our experiences as working moms, getting older and all the hilarious everyday tragedies that go along with that: an indie series was the perfect medium.

FRENZER: But one of our "Daydream" puppets does make a cameo!

How big of a role does PLG play in this series?

KENIN: It was shot almost entirely in PLG: on Flatbush and Ocean Avenues; Bluebird, lots in Bluebird. We employed many PLG residents in the cast and crew. Our director/editor, Ryan Blackwell, is a PLG resident, as are seven other principal actors and many volunteer neighbors who helped as background and production assistants.



Several of the cast and crew members of "47 Secrets..."—including the director of the series—are PLG residents. In the still above are some of them. Left to right: Siobhan O'Neill (actor and Rutland 2 resident); Laura Frenzer (actor, co-producer, co-writer and Ocean Avenue resident); April Armstrong (actor); and Rohana Kenin (actor, co-writer, co-producer and Ocean Avenue resident).

FRENZER: Just like we did with "Daydream," we reached out to our community and received so much support. Many of the 220 Indiegogo backers that funded the series came from the neighborhood. They have been our cheerleaders and we are so grateful. It takes a village to produce a web series!

How many episodes are in the first season?

KENIN: There are six episodes in the first season and all are under six minutes so it's perfect for a little break at work or while the kids are at the playground.

Where can people watch the show?

FRENZER: You can watch it for free on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/47SecretsToAYoungerYou>. Subscribing to the YouTube channel is also free, and it means you're the first to know when new episodes are uploaded.

KENIN: And for updates on upcoming episodes, you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter and join the mailing list on our website at www.47SecretsToAYoungerYou.com.

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"47 Secrets To A Younger You" was an IndieWire Women and Hollywood September 2015 Web series pick, and an official selection at the Brooklyn Web Fest, nominated for Best Ensemble, Best Cinematography and winner of the sole Honorable Mention—Made in New York Award.

The Honorable Genine D. Edwards: State Supreme Court Candidate

Judge Genine Edwards isn't necessarily a lifelong resident of Prospect Lefferts Gardens, but the neighborhood has been part of her life since her early childhood school days.

A lifelong Brooklynite who was reared in Crown Heights, she used to travel here as a young girl to attend a home-based art class on Maple Street. She never forgot the lush tree canopies, the mix of cultures, the big homes, and the close proximity to the Brooklyn Public Library, Prospect Park and the Botanic Gardens.

She lived her dream of becoming a lawyer, then a wife and a mother, and then a judge. But she also lived her dream to return to the neighborhood of good childhood memories, PLG, and make it her home.

Judge Edwards is also a long-serving member of the board of the Lefferts Manor Association.

She has been a Civil Court Judge in New York City since 2005. Four years ago she was appointed an Acting Supreme Court Justice of the State of New York.

Now she is running unopposed in the November election—endorsed by the Democratic, Republican and Conservative Parties—to be an elected New York State Supreme Court Justice.

How long have you been in the neighborhood?

Ten years. But I go back to my earliest childhood when I attended a home-based art class here. Those memories of this neighborhood stayed with me.

Where do you live?

Lincoln Road, with my three sons: a set of 12-year-old twins and a 14-year-old. I'm divorced.

Where'd you live prior?

I was living in Prospect Heights in a co-op. But we were expanding our family and needed a home to accommodate our children. A colleague, who lives on Lincoln Road, told me about a neighbor of hers who was interested in selling to a young family.

What was the condition of the house? Was there much renovation to do?

We did everything: the wiring, new walls in the bedrooms, new kitchen. My house is a typical home. It's always being updated.

What do you think of the neighborhood's gentrification?

I think there has to be a way for all of us to live together. I am not fond of people being pushed out of homes and businesses they've lived in or worked in for thirty or fifty years. But this neighborhood has always been diverse. There is no reason we can't live together.

What do you guys do for fun? What do you do when you are not a judge?

I basically hang out with my boys. I enjoy reading and playing board games with my family. I don't travel much because of commitments and attending to the needs of my sons. I'm making sure that my sons move forward into manhood and whatever they need, that comes first.

You have had a pretty diversified career as a judge and lawyer. You were assistant corporate counsel defending the City of New York,

defense counsel for the New York Power Authority in discrimination cases, volunteer Small Claims Court arbitrator, and a Civil Court Judge. Did you always aspire to be a judge? What do you like about the law?

Well, I went into international studies at Long Island University and graduated with a perfect 3.9 grade point average but I could not get a job at the United Nations. I decided to apply to law school and was admitted to St. John's University School of Law. When I got to law school, that was when I realized that the judge is the one that really affects a person's life and I wanted to be part of that. I just like being involved in dispute resolution.

Some of the cases you handle as an Acting Supreme Court Justice deal mainly with housing litigation against the New York City Housing Authority. How does that differ from being a housing court judge?

One type of case I handle is an Article 78 proceeding, where a public housing resident could lose their apartment because they violated NYCHA rules. If the tenant is not satisfied with the determination from NYCHA then they can commence an Article 78 proceeding where I would determine whether NYCHA's decision was fair pursuant to the law. My role is different from landlord/tenant disputes because I ascertain whether the decision made was fair, I am not deciding the case.



The Brooklyn Eagle

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS



Borough President Eric Adams (center) stopped by to congratulate John Augustin (left) and Jason Young (right) and help to distribute book bags to neighborhood kids.

The Brooklyn Greenery: There's More To It Than Just Healthy Food

The Brooklyn Greenery aims to raise the bar on serving fresh, healthy food in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, and the two young entrepreneurs behind the venture possess the right attitude and intelligence to keep the bar high. Founded by partners Jason Young and John Augustin, lifelong Flatbush residents, The Brooklyn Greenery is equal parts healthy food emporium, politically- and environmentally-correct discussion hall, book exchange and even a live music and spoken word venue. The founders had the clout this summer to arrange a block party on Beekman Court to donate more than 100 bookbags with school supplies to neighborhood kids. Even Borough President Eric Adams attended to congratulate the duo. "We grew up here and we know that healthy food is not much of an option," Young says. "We grew up on fast food and I still love a good burger, but our food system is largely unhealthy and unregulated and we, all of us, are not eating healthy. The neighborhood is changing and there're a lot of educated people moving here, but when it comes to healthy, fresh foods, even the educated are mis-educated when it comes to food." Through trial and error, Young and Augustin came up with dozens of smoothies, salads, high-octane juice drink combinations and granola bowls to energize, cleanse and satisfy. Their concoctions are also delicious. The Brooklyn Greenery is open daily at 560 Flatbush Avenue.

New Census Study (continued from page 1)

PLG's Age Diversity

The Survey also supplied data that suggests PLG is becoming both a youthful enclave and a retirement community at the same time.

Young working adults (so-called Millennials) and residents entering retirement age (Baby Boomers and their elders) are sizable blocks of the local population. But both are growing at different rates.

The rate of growth in the number of households with retirement-age occupants is soaring while, in absolute numbers, households with young adults outnumber all others by a two-to-one margin.

There were 7,093 households in 2013 where at least one resident ranged in age from 25 to 30, an increase of 5.8 percent over 2010. Another way to look at it, out of the 14,867 total households in PLG, almost half are occupied by at least one person between 25-to-30-years old.

Retirement-age Baby Boomers, neighbors aged 65 to 74, lived in 2,444 households in 2013, up 19 percent from 2010.

Celebrate Neighbor Pia Raymond's Debut Children's Book

The warm and loving relationship between a beloved uncle, a favorite niece and the grandnephew he would never meet are the spirits at the heart of "Celebrate Smiles," Pia Raymond's self-published children's book.

A licensed social worker, Lefferts Manor Association vice president and lifelong resident of Maple 1, Raymond released the book last November, just three months before the birth of her second child, Maple.

Raymond says the book was inspired by two life-changing events: the first time she saw her first-born son, Sage, smile as an infant and the life lessons she learned from her beloved, late uncle Syl.

Written in the rhythmical cadence of a nursery school poem that young children up to age 7 will enjoy reading or having read to them, "Celebrate Smiles" tells the simple story of a young girl's anticipation and excitement in spending her birthday with her favorite uncle.

Raymond's uncle, who died in 2004, was Syl Williamson, a community leader and Crown Heights institution who ran Trophies By Syl, a sports equipment and trophy store, for nearly 50 years. Raymond inherited the store and operated it for several years as Legacy Awards.

In fact, the corner of Nostrand Avenue and Park Place where the store was located was co-named, "Syl Williamson Way." Sage's middle name is also Syl.

"My uncle was such an influence on me," she says. "I didn't live with my natural father, but with my uncle, aunt and mother. He actually raised me as a father would.

"He was a strong community leader."

She said her uncle had a beautiful smile and insisted that his customers showed one, too.

"If someone came in the store grumpy and was about to buy something without smiling, he'd give them their money back, tell them to go back outside and come in with a smile."

But little Sage's smile wasn't too bad, either.

"It was watching my sleeping son smile for the first time that inspired me to write the book," Raymond says. "I believe that our smile has the power to lift our spirits and those around us. I want children and adults alike to be encouraged to smile in the midst of any situation."

In addition to Amazon.com, "Celebrate Smiles" can also be acquired at the website of Raymond's organization, Creating Legacies, www.creatinglegacies.net.



LMA board member and lifelong PLG resident Pia Raymond, with daughter, Maple (left) and son, Sage, reading from *Celebrate Smiles*.

Taken Forever Photography

A 2015 House Tour Thanks

by Mary Miller

All the parts came together on May 31st for a successful house tour—homes, gardens, volunteers, refreshments, music, and even the weather.

The 45th Annual PLG House & Garden Tour, the first in decades to run without the caring eye and expert guidance of our late house tour impresario, Carole Schaffer, was a big hit.

An estimated 500 tour-goers visited eight lovely homes, two spectacular gardens and ended the afternoon with live jazz at Bluebird as a raging thunderstorm erupted minutes after the tour closed.

Carole's spirit scripted a magnificent afternoon. Her home block, Midwood I, featured three destinations, including a refreshment and drink stop where Donna and Jay Rasin-Waters and Louise Daniel generously opened their adjoining backyards.

We are grateful to those who offered their homes and gardens, and to the 100-plus volunteers who acted as tour guides.

A special thanks go to the many neighborhood merchants, restaurants, boutiques and other shops that offered special tour day discounts to tour-goers. We're especially grateful to Allan's Bakery, Gratitude Café, Gino's Trattoria and Tip of the Tongue Café (which also hosted tour day ticket sales).

The jazz concert was courtesy of Bette Cunningham, who arranged for her first cousin's husband, trumpeter Dwayne Eubanks and his trio, to close out the day in high style.

Now it's time to begin planning for the 2016 House Tour. If you'd like to open your home, show your secret garden, volunteer as a guide, sell tickets, or simply offer suggestions, please call 718-693-5109.



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