

# WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

NYU's Independent Student Newspaper | est. 1973

## Mills announces free tuition for low-income students starting fall 2024

By **BRUNA HORVATH**  
Deputy News Editor

Low-income students will no longer have to pay tuition at NYU starting in the fall 2024 semester, according to an announcement made by university president Linda Mills at her inauguration on Oct. 17. The change will only apply to incoming students who live in households earning annual incomes of \$100,000 or less.

The ceremony, which took place at the Paulson Center, cemented Mills as the 17th president of NYU, the first to be a woman. Mills succeeds former president Andrew Hamilton, who attended the event alongside the university's 15th president, John Sexton.

"I couldn't be more excited," Hamilton said in an interview with WSN. "There have been 16 presidents before Linda and each one of us builds on the achievements of the predecessor. I had the great good fortune of following John Sexton, and Linda, I know, will build on the achievements of her predecessors and NYU will be in good hands."

Hamilton announced he would step down from his role as president in April 2022.

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## How Stuart Robinson's misconduct went overlooked for years

By **ANIA KEENAN**  
Features Editor

*Content warning: This article discusses sexual and verbal harassment.*

In 2013, NYU's former athletics director, Stuart Robinson, wrote an email to a colleague at the State University of New York, New Paltz. "Go make babies! WOW! I went there," read the email. For employees of the athletics departments at NYU and New Paltz, incidents like this became all too common under Robinson's tenure.

For three years, Robinson allegedly sexually harassed and made inappropriate comments toward department staff at NYU. Staff said they repeatedly reported his behavior to human resources at NYU's athletics department, but some told WSN the university either dismissed their complaints or took minimal action in response. Multiple department employees were allegedly told to "suck it up," or that "Stuart can do whatever he wants" by a human resources representative.

During his over three decades in collegiate athletics, Robinson allegedly harassed multiple athletics department staff at NYU and New Paltz, as well as student-athletes at New Paltz. At both universities, sources said there were systems and people that kept victims' stories from coming to light.

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# Celebrating 50 years of the Washington Square News



Aaliya Luthra / WSN

## 2023 marks a half century of NYU's independent student newspaper. Here's a look into what's happened between its start and now.

By **NAISHA ROY**  
Deputy Managing Editor

If you walk into the basement of NYU's Third Avenue North residence hall on a Sunday afternoon you'll be greeted by what may seem like utter chaos: furious typing at every desk, a cow bell ringing to signal conference room meetings and the murmuring of editors trying to perfect their stories for the day. This organized chaos makes up the *Washington Square News*, but there's a lot behind this day-to-day commotion.

WSN was founded in 1973, the year that NYU sold its University Heights campus in the Bronx and merged with the Washington Square campus most students know today. The student newspapers of each campus — "*The Heights Daily News*" and the "*Washington Square Journal*" — combined to make the university's first daily paper, which still publishes today. Originally called "*Washington Square Daily News*," WSN dropped the "*Daily*" from its name before 1976.

This year, NYU's paper celebrates its 50-year anniversary.

### New beginnings

Volume one, edition one of WSN printed on Thursday, Sept. 20, 1973. The paper promised to hold the university accountable not only for

its impact on incoming students, but also for those already paying tuition. An article introducing the paper titled "New Morning" headed the edition's second page.

"One of the things necessary in this approach to reporting the news is a redefinition of the relationship between the student and the university," the article reads. "No longer can the student be looked upon as one who willingly surrenders himself to the school in return for the knowledge he receives from it."

Since then, WSN's stories have done exactly that, with many themes from its 2023 articles mirroring those featured in its 1973 edition. Headlines from the first paper include "Loans: Tighter than ever" and "Inflation may force tuition boost next year," issues students still face — and cover in the news — at NYU today. The 1973 paper tackled construction lawsuits at Bobst Library and faculty unionization struggles, similar to recent coverage of the construction and opening of the new Paulson Center and the adjunct faculty's struggle to secure a contract with the university. Fifty years ago, the paper covered protests in Washington Square Park calling for former president Richard Nixon's impeachment. Today, it covers transgender rights and anti-immigration and Customs Enforcement protests in the very same park.

"The students are essentially customers at a university," said Alvin Chang, who served as the edi-

tor-in-chief in 2007 and the editorial staff's adviser during the 2021-22 academic year. "There's just not that many places where the student's voice can carry weight and students' concerns can carry weight, and an independent student newspaper plays a pretty integral part of that," he said.

### Breaking stories

Over the course of its time at NYU, WSN has published countless stories that have led to tangible changes on campus and beyond. An iconic example of this was the paper's 2004 coverage of "Bobst Boy," a student who lived in Bobst Library for nearly eight months. WSN reported that then-sophomore Steve Stanzak had been living in Bobst, showering at friends' apartments and nearby gyms. On his personal blog and in an interview with WSN, Stanzak attributed his multi-month stay in the library to the high cost of housing and limited financial aid at the university.

"One of the reasons it gained a lot of traction was because it was such a quintessential NYU story — one that really captured essentially the struggles of being in New York City, at NYU, and not having a real campus," Chang said of the coverage, which was published just before his time at the paper. After the story broke, larger publications such as

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## 'Manifest destiny': NYU's history of expansion

By **CARMO MONIZ**  
Managing Editor

As you walk through Washington Square Park, the unofficial center of all goings-on at NYU, it's impossible to miss the dark red sandstone of Bobst Library's exterior, the towering Kimmel Center for University Life building, or the scattered purple flags hanging off of more buildings than you can count.

It's hard to imagine the park or Greenwich Village without an NYU building at every corner, but just over 50 years ago, many of these now staples of the university did not yet exist.

When NYU was founded, in 1831, the university had no presence in Washington Square, and wouldn't until four years later. Its first building on the square, the University Building, was located on the east side of the park, and contained academic facilities, as well as apartments on its upper floors. The building has since been demolished, rebuilt once and renamed twice, and is now the Silver Center for Arts and Science.

NYU now owns more than 70 buildings in the Greenwich Village area, the result of over a century of expansion.

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## Violets victorious as NYU's mascot, WSN survey finds

By **KRISH DEV** and  
**MAISIE ZIPFEL**

Violets or Bobcats? It's a dilemma that has plagued the minds of NYU students for decades.

Approximately 73% of students and faculty said they prefer Violets over Bobcats when asked which mascot they preferred as the school's representative in a WSN survey.

Of 500 students and faculty surveyed in Bobst Library, 367 said they preferred Violets as NYU's mascot, while 132 chose the Bobcat. One student could not decide between the two. Sophomore Brielle Karolak said she preferred the "Violet" as the university's mascot because of its familiarity.

"I feel like 'Violets' is used more often than 'Bobcats,' so that's just what I'm used to," Karolak said.

According to the university's faculty handbook, the Violet mascot stems from the colors of the uniforms NYU athletes have worn for over a century, although the origin of the university color itself is debated. Following a brief period when a student dressed up as a violet flower at sports events, NYU decided Violets "did not instill great awe or foreboding in NYU's opponents."

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# Celebrating 50 years of the Washington Square News

*The New York Times* and the BBC quickly wrote about it too. NYU eventually provided Stanzak with free on-campus housing in Lafayette Hall for the rest of the semester.

In November 2008, then-editor-in-chief Adam Playford and reporter Marc Beja investigated crime statistics at NYU. In a multi-part investigation, they found that the university underreported substance abuse incidents on campus. They reported that NYU utilized a campus map that only included three residence halls, and claimed the others were considered to be off campus. The university was thereby able to boast a comparatively small number of on-campus crimes.

"They had said there were like two instances of any drugs on campus in years and years," Beja said. "I spoke to some experts and they were like, 'NYU's totally fudging this.'"

In 2008, the series won a national award for in-depth reporting from the Society of Professional Journalists, one of the nation's best-known journalism organizations.

"I recall the university being kind of receptive, and when we sat down with the vice president of public safety, they were like, 'Oh, gee, is that really how we do that? We hadn't thought of that before,'" Playford said.

Russell Berman, who was WSN's editor-in-chief in the fall of 2003 and is now the paper's editorial adviser, helped edit coverage of a string of suicides, that took place at NYU, some inside Bobst Library, between 2003 and 2005. As a result, the university installed aluminum guardrails, which still exist, on each floor as a preventative measure. This addition and its history was revisited in a 2022 feature piece.

"It was a very difficult news story to cover, because it's such a tragedy when somebody takes their own life and in such a way," Berman said. "But it taught me a lot about how to cover those stories in a way that's both responsible and sensitive."

## Entering a digital world

In 2000, WSN launched its website. The newspaper maintained both a print and online edition for 20 years, but it went fully digital during the pandemic.

This shift was not as simple as it sounds, though. As Chang explained, what ensued was a complete re-prioritization of how daily production took place.

"The timing of having to get a certain number of stories published and ready every single day drove a lot of the WSN workflow," Chang said. "We didn't focus enough on the shift to digital because a lot of times we would get to the end of the night and send off the paper and then a handful of us would as fast as possible try to post the stories online."

The first version of the website was a simple black-and-white interface. It listed several stories and had a small menu on the side, linking to the paper's different sections. Over the next few years, the website introduced color, images and advertisements, expanding to include online-only stories and longer features.

As the website grew, the print edition of the paper quickly lost readers' interest. According to Chang, advertisers started to prefer digital ads over print ones, and students picked up physical editions of the paper less frequently.

Beja recalled the newsroom's reaction when WSN stopped publishing its Friday print edition, in 2008.

"I wrote the story when we dropped the Friday edition — people were mad about it internally, and I was like, 'no, guys, we have to write this,'" he said. "We've been a daily print paper for years. People were really upset."

During the pandemic, the paper's daily production was forced to go fully virtual. When writers returned to WSN in 2021, Chang pushed to drop the print edition altogether, and the main focus became the website.

Sasha Cohen, the paper's arts editor during the 2020-21 academic year, remembered experimenting with the digital design of the paper's arts issue when the paper's staff was moved online.

"How could we reinvent the way in which we're presenting content?" she asked. "Something we were really fascinated by was mixed media, finding this intertwining between digital images and illustration."

Today, WSN's website looks vastly different. Its red-and-black color scheme is apparent across the page, and vibrant images accompany every story. Users can navigate hundreds of pages, sections and subsections, all with just a few clicks.

## The walkout and the return

Running a daily campus newspaper isn't always the easiest task, and the newspaper faced one of its biggest obstacles in the fall of 2020. Cole Stallone, the editor-in-chief at the time, was fired without warning, and a new adviser, Kenna Griffin, was brought in without full disclosure of her powers and responsibilities over the staff.

Issues quickly arose with Griffin's behavior toward staff members, as well as the level of independence WSN had from the university.

Disagreements with the adviser reached a breaking point on Sept. 28, 2020, when nearly the entire editorial staff resigned. For roughly a whole semester, NYU didn't have its student paper.

"People's individual feelings on staff, they were hurt and they were offended by certain words and actions," said Manasa Gudavalli, who was a deputy multimedia editor at the time of the walkout, and is now editor-in-chief. "All of a sudden, a New York Times article came out about it, and it really hit me how serious this was. Every college has a student paper. We are NYU's main source of news and information."

The future of WSN remained uncertain for months, until a group of

alumni came together to rebuild the paper. They reached out to the previous staff and brought some back to the newsroom.

The editorial board, which consisted of NYU journalism professors and senior staff members at WSN, expanded to include additional staffers, allowing for more student representation. The alumni also focused on promoting diversity in the newsroom and working to rekindle relationships with student activist groups that had previously boycotted the paper due to its portrayal of them.

"WSN meant a lot to people, and it was really valuable to a lot of people both in terms of their personal lives, but also their professional lives," said Chang, who was part of the alumni group that reinstated the paper. "You just kind of take it for granted, you expect it to be there, and for a university like NYU with a huge journalism school to be able to support a student newspaper. But it

doesn't exist unless people actually support the institution."

Despite its obstacles, WSN has remained a space of collaboration for writers and contributors to work together, and ultimately put out a daily paper while gaining valuable skills for future jobs — in journalism or otherwise. It's also remained a way to make friends that last far beyond the newsroom.

"Almost all of the friends that I still keep in touch with from my days at NYU, nearly 20 years later, are people that I met and became friends with while working at WSN," Berman said.

"A lot of these people are people that I know 20 years down the line, I will still be in touch with," Gudavalli said. "And I think that's a really sweet thought."

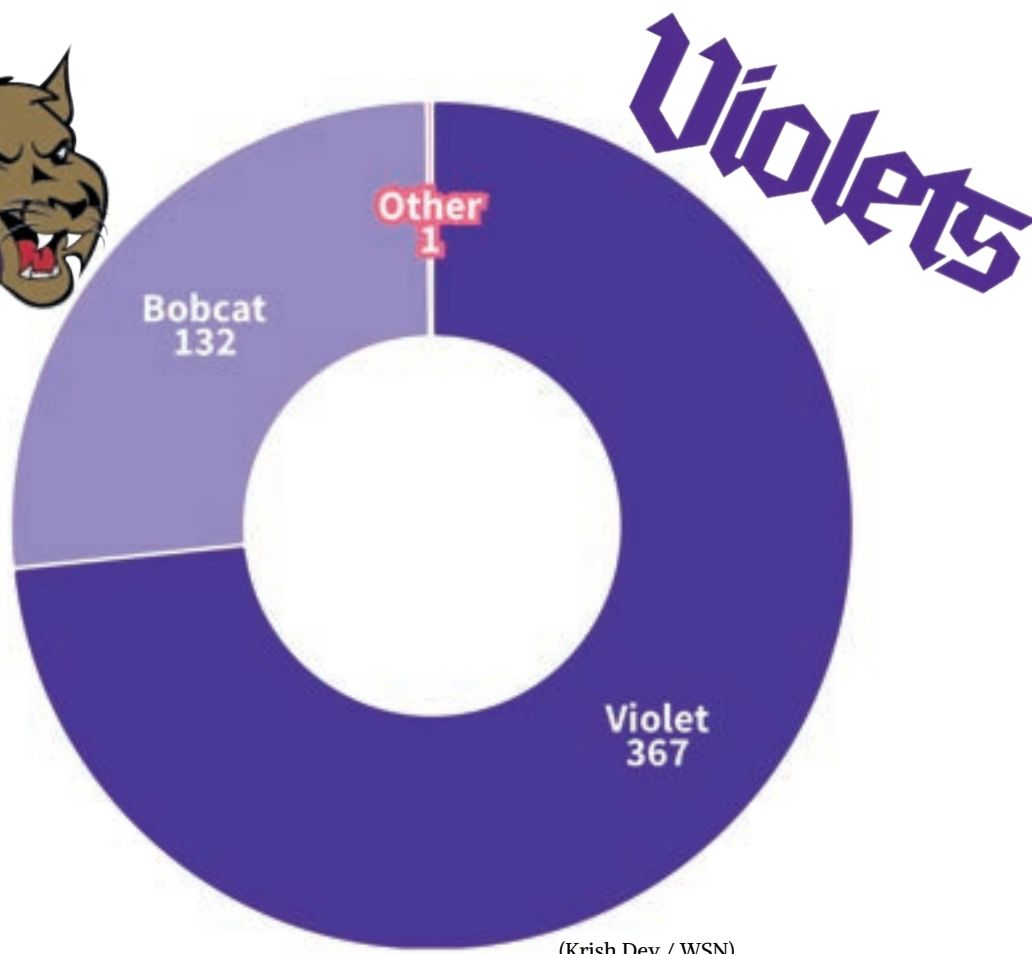
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## Bobst Library gets a refresh at 50



Bobst Library also celebrated its 50th birthday this year. The first floor has recently undergone renovations, replacing the old black-and-white tile floors with blue carpets and colorful furniture. (Natalia Kempthorne-Curiel / WSN)

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Around 73% of NYU students and faculty said they prefer the term "violet" as the university's mascot, according to a WSN survey of 500 people.

## Violets victorious as NYU's mascot, WSN survey finds

Most students and faculty said that NYU's mascot should be the Violets, not the Bobcats.

On Dec. 8, 1983, NYU made the bobcat its official mascot. The name came from a shortened form of Bobst Catalog, a reference to the library's register of all bibliographic terms.

At the start of the 2021-22 academic year, however, NYU Athletics underwent an apparent rebranding, reconstructing the school's logos and highlighting 'the Violets.' The NYU Athletics statement said that post-pandemic, the student body's desire to compete grew, warranting a change in mascot representation.

Max Oliveira, a sophomore and a member of the NYU baseball team, favored the more popular "Violet" mascot.

"When the athletic program got a new logo, it was a new era, and we needed to move away from the Bobcats," Oliveira said.

On the other hand, first-year Milo Castronovo believes the Bobcat would be a better choice for athletic events than the former violet flower.

"Bobcats are a better mascot for sports because we can have someone actually dress up at halftime and hype up the crowd," Castronovo said.

The debate between the two mascots has left many students perplexed. First-year Chloe Stone, who is on NYU's softball team, said she believes that the discourse between two separate mascots only divides an already lackluster university spirit.

"I'm kind of confused, honestly, because, for sports, our mascot is the 'Violets,' but then I guess for the university as a whole it's the 'Bobcats,' I don't know," Stone said. "I'm really confused by why we have two, and it does not make sense to me at all."

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# Linda Mills inaugurated as new university president

Starting in the fall 2024 semester, students in households that make less than \$100,000 will not have to pay tuition at NYU.

During her speech, Mills also revealed that the university's prison education program, which provides incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students with free college courses, will now allow students to earn bachelor's degrees.

"The wisdom is in the room right here right now," Mills said. "We need to build on this internal and untapped imagination to develop our capacity and do what NYU does best, seize the future."

Before she became NYU's president, Mills worked overseeing the university's abroad campuses, a role she began in 2012. In 2002, Mills became vice provost, and then senior vice provost in 2006. She was also a chaired professor at the Silver School of Social Work and is the executive director of NYU's Center on Violence and Recovery. Mills has served as an attorney and filmmaker, and is the co-founder of the university's Production Lab.

Mills is a licensed social worker as well

as a member of the California Bar. She received a Ph.D in health policy from Brandeis University in 1994, and a masters in social work from San Francisco State University in 1986. In 1983, she graduated from the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco and graduated from the University of California, Irvine in 1979.

Former New York City mayor Bill de Blasio said he believes the announcement will help alleviate the economic burdens many students face while attending NYU.

"Part of why I came to NYU as an undergrad was I felt it represented something inclusive," de Blasio said in an interview with WSN. "Often the greatest form of exclusion is economic and the idea that now families of more modest means can know their child is getting an education. This is the kind of thing you dream about when you think about how to make fundamental change."

Evan Chesler, the recently appointed chair of the university's board of trustees, said that he thinks Mills' announcement will expand academic opportunities for low-income students.

"Our story is all about access, giving students an education that they might not otherwise have received — that's what I got from this university," Chesler said in an interview with WSN. "Everything that President Mills is focused on is giving access to a world class education for students who might not otherwise get it."

Toward the end of the ceremony, around 40 students and faculty gathered outside of Paulson to protest recent changes to adjunct professors' course assignments. Other on-campus unions, including Contract Faculty United, which

represents contract faculty at NYU, and ACT-UAW Local 7902, which represents part-time faculty at the university, held signs outside of the building.

Since February, the contract faculty union has been demanding recognition from NYU, asking for fair collective bargaining with the administration, the assurance of due process for faculty terminations and the implementation of annual raises that match inflation rates.

The adjunct union has also recently become unhappy with the university's administration. On Sept. 19, members of ACT-UAW Local 7902 wrote an open letter to Mills, garnering over 2,000 signatures. In the letter, the union demanded that NYU restore any jobs adjuncts lost this year to what the university has said were pandemic-related enrollment and budget changes.

In an email interview with WSN in March, Mills said she believes that all employees of NYU, regardless of union status, should be "treated with dignity" and that the univer-

sity's goal in bargaining efforts is to come to an agreement that respects and honors the contributions of these employees.

Stephen Rechner, the president of the union of clerical, administrative and technical staff at NYU, said adequate benefits for university workers are a necessity for employees to be able to continue to work there.

"We have to be able to afford to live in this city," Rechner said. "We're here to talk to Linda Mills today directly and tell her that workers need to be paid, workers deserve a good contract that protects their benefits and their wages and their working conditions, so that NYU is a place where people can stay."

The university did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the rally.

*Maisie Zipfel contributed reporting.*

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University President Linda Mills delivers a speech at her inauguration at the Paulson Center on Tuesday, Oct. 17. (Manasa Gudavalli / WSN)



Former NYU presidents John Sexton and Andrew Hamilton watch current president Linda Mills give her inaugural address. (Manasa Gudavalli / WSN)

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## 'Manifest destiny': NYU's history of expansion in Washington Square

During its time in Washington Square, the university has seen some of the most quintessential moments in the neighborhood's history, from a 1917 declaration of the park as an independent republic to the community's fight against Robert Moses' plan to run a highway through the park in the '50s.

The university's decades-long presence has made it an integral part of the neighborhood, but its expansion efforts have often clashed with opposition from artists and longtime residents of the neighborhood.

In a 1985 WSN article titled "Grave beginnings for Washington Square Park," writer Pierre Haddad reflected on the park's history and the university's growing presence around it. Haddad chronicled the Village's journey, from a mass burial ground in the late 1700s to a haven of picturesque houses and gardens, to a space for offices, factories and boarding houses occupied by Bohemians.

"Washington Square regained its earlier character by the 1920s as the years pushed the limits of the city ever northward," Haddad wrote in the article. "The area around the square has since remained a symbol of continuity between past and present."

## 'An Urban Space Odyssey': NYU's vision for Washington Square in the '60s and '70s

In 1964, architects Philip Johnson and Robert Foster designed a plan for university buildings on the east and south sides of Washington Square Park, under the direction of James Hester, NYU's 11th president. The design included plans for four red sandstone buildings reaching from Waverly Place to LaGuardia Place, where Bobst Library, Tisch Hall, the Silver Center, Goddard Hall, and the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development now stand.

According to a 1977 WSN article, titled "NYU's Master Plan: An Urban Space Odyssey," the plan also included an arched glass structure between what are now the Silver and Steinhardt School buildings. The glass arch, named the "galleria," was inspired by Italian designs, and would have been equipped with air conditioning.

William Payne, a former NYU spokesperson, told WSN in 1977 that the university had not abandoned the 1964 plan — it was meant to give NYU a design concept and was created to be adjusted.

"Philip Johnson designed an ultimate NYU," Payne said. "Money considerations made some plans impossible, but can't you have a dream?"

One of Hester's most significant contributions to NYU's campus was Bobst Library, though the project faced stark opposition from local residents at the time.

In the 1977 article, WSN editor Brian Huggins wrote that residents were concerned that the building would block the open space between Houston Street and Washington Square Park. The opposition caused construction to be delayed by a year. In July 1966, the university was able to go forward with plans for the library, and it was completed in 1973.

"Local residents claimed the 150-foot cubic structure would cast a

shadow on the park and destroy whatever aesthetic appeal Washington Square had left," Huggins wrote. "Residents in Washington Square Village claimed the monolith would obstruct their view."

The same year that Bobst was built, the university made the decision to sell its undergraduate campus in the Bronx, which it had opened in 1894, due to financial hardship. The space, which NYU previously considered its main campus, was acquired by Bronx Community College.

As a result, the '70s saw Washington Square become the center of the university, where, according to NYU spokesperson John Beckman, there were few dorms and no central library. Beckman said that the university then embarked on a decades-long development plan, in which it built new residence halls, repurposed existing buildings for teaching and laboratory uses, and obtained housing for faculty.

"Broadly speaking, the NYU that we know today started in the early 1970s," Beckman said. "The then-board of trustees and the senior leadership of the university made an important strategic decision: to transform NYU from a good regional university into a strong, highly selective, top national research university."

Hester's additions to the Washington Square campus had followed a number of developments that came after many factory lofts and residences south of the park were demolished by the city in the '50s, according to Huggins. What came after was an increase in student and faculty housing on campus.

As more students moved into the Village to attend NYU in the '80s, '90s and 2000s, many residents were displaced, according to Andrew Berman, the executive director of the nonprofit Village Preservation.

"When it built those huge dorms on Third Avenue and the East Village, that had a secondary effect," Berman said.

In 1964, NYU purchased Washington Square Village, now a graduate and faculty housing development which houses more than 1,000 families. Only three years later, it finished building the three buildings that make up the Silver Towers development, two of which house students and faculty.

Another project, the 14-story Warren Weaver Hall, was completed the year after Hester took office. Loeb Student Center — which the Kimmel Center has since replaced — and Weinstein Hall had been built under his predecessor, Carroll Newsom.

Joseph Roberto, who was formerly NYU's official architect, said that future university construction near Washington Square would focus on improving already existing buildings.

"Considering the world you're faced with, you have to have imagination and far-fetched ideas to attract publicity and attention," Roberto said in the 1977 article. "Even though the galleria was beyond our means and no one had serious thoughts of constructing it, it served the purpose because it showed NYU had ideas and a master plan."

## NYU's \$6 billion expansion plan and the Greenwich Vil- lage community

In 2007, another plan for NYU development was announced, although this time with a projected 6-million-square-foot expansion. John Sexton, the university's 15th president, wrote in a letter that the plan, called NYU 2031, was meant to ensure that the university's facilities could keep up with its growth.

The project also envisioned NYU spaces in Brooklyn and on Governors Island, but the largest part of the expansion — which included 3 million square feet of construction — was to take place in Greenwich Village. Like other expansion projects before it, the 2031 Plan was met with opposition from Village residents, but the backlash was on a larger scale.

One of the project's biggest opponents came from within NYU. Faculty Against the Sexton Plan, a group of around 400 professors, were vocal critics, saying that it would increase tuition costs and that it disregarded faculty input. In 2008, two years before the plan was announced, the university had said that it would raise tuition and cut jobs to fund its expansion plans.

By April 2012, 23 faculty departments had passed resolutions against the plan. Andrew Ross, a professor of social and cultural analysis who was involved in Faculty Against the Sexton Plan, said that many students were also against the plan, and that it faced so much opposition because it was mostly planned by the administration, not faculty or the surrounding community.

"The only people that were not against it were the NYU administration," Ross said. "You want to ask yourself, 'Well, why does the university have to be continually expanding in this way? What is the purpose of that expansion? What is the purpose of that growth?' It doesn't have to grow in that way."

Berman, the Village Preservation director, said that in his 30 years of working on the issues between NYU and the Village community, he has found that residents' biggest complaint against the university has been that it is misleading in its communication about development plans.

"John Sexton and the NYU 2031 Plan pretty much destroyed the university's relationship with the surrounding community, and it's never been repaired since, at least in terms of administration and leadership," Berman said. "It was a kind of scorched-earth policy, where they really burnt that bridge and have made no efforts to repair it since then."

At the heart of the 2031 Plan were two superblocks enclosed by West Third Street, LaGuardia Place, Houston Street and Mercer Street. NYU proposed constructing four new university buildings on the blocks, one of which would become the present-day Paulson Center.

The plan was unanimously rejected in February 2012 by Manhattan Community Board 2, which represents Greenwich Village and other downtown neighborhoods.

During the approval process for the plan, NYU received a number of recommendations from a community task force that included members of Community Board 2. The recommendations were intended to ensure that the 2031 Plan took the well-being of the community into account. Some of the recommendations were that NYU make an effort to decentralize its development, take the character of other buildings in the Village into account in the design for new buildings and seek community input.

According to former Community Board 2 member Sean Sweeney, however, NYU did not listen to many of the task force's suggestions.

"NYU is a real estate development corporation disguised as a university," said Sweeney, who is the director of the community advocacy group SoHo Alliance.

Beckman, the university spokesperson, said that a number of changes to the project during the land use review process, including reducing the height of all four buildings on the superblocks, directly addressed the



Aaliya Luthra / WSN

community board's concerns. He said NYU did not, however, agree that it should be prohibited from expanding on the superblocks, which it has owned for decades.

After it was rejected by the community board, the 2031 Plan's area was reduced by 370,000 square feet. In July 2012, it was approved by the New York City Council. The university faced a number of lawsuits after the approval, including one from various community groups and another from residents of Washington Square Village. The first lawsuit restricted the space in which NYU had city approval to expand, and the second was dismissed.

The university later rebranded the 2031 Plan as the Core Plan, with the Paulson Center as its central focus. Currently, the university does not plan to revive any other parts of the original plan, according to Beckman.

"NYU's space needs remain acute, notwithstanding the opening of the Paulson Center," Beckman said. "However, at this point the university doesn't have immediate plans for the other project sites identified under the Core Plan."

James Russell, a journalist who writes about architecture and a critic of the 2031 Plan, said the distrust the university built with the Village made it more difficult for it to expand.

"NYU cannot help but be the 800-pound gorilla in the neighborhood," Russell said. "As an urban campus, it should simply seek graceful integration into its physical surroundings and more opportunities for the non-NYU community to engage with NYU people, not just to be good neighbors but as a way of leveraging New York City's great attributes."

## A supermarket, the Village and the university

Years later, the 2031 Plan continues to affect Greenwich Village residents. A Morton Williams supermarket on Bleecker Street and LaGuardia Place, situated on a property owned by NYU, might be out of service for a few years due to an agreement the university made with the city, allowing it to build a public school on the lot.

The deal was made as part of the approvals process for NYU's expansion plan, and set a deadline for the New York City School Construction Authority to decide whether to use the lot by the end of 2014. The deadline was twice extended, stretching until the end of 2021, and the SCA established a plan to build a school on the lot in November of that year. The university has once again extended the deadline for the SCA to decide if it wants the lot, leaving the future of the supermarket uncertain.

Avi Kaner, the owner and operator of various Morton Williams locations throughout the city, said that there are currently three possibilities for the supermarket's future. The city could choose not to take the lot and

allow the supermarket to stay, the university could provide the city with space for a school in future developments, or the supermarket could share the site with the public school. Should the last scenario occur, the community will be left without a supermarket for at least three years.

"We are deeply engaged with NYU, the city, community groups and elected officials to ensure the supermarket is saved," Kaner said.

Karin Kiontke, a researcher in NYU's biology department who used to live in graduate student housing near the market, said that she has been investigating the university's role in the Village. For the last 17 years, she has been caring for LaGuardia Corner Gardens, a small community garden next to the Morton Williams. She said that if construction on the lot moves forward, the garden, which has existed since 1981, will likely be destroyed.

"We have been threatened by NYU since forever," Kiontke said. "There's this resistance of the community, and then they tell you this and they do something different."

Kiontke said that while many residents don't like the university's presence, many restaurants and shops benefit from the patronage of the tens of thousands of students and faculty NYU brings to the Village. This has been the case since NYU began to focus on making the Washington Square campus residential. As NYU built more dorms and faculty housing, local businesses were provided with more and more customers.

A 1985 WSN article, titled "Boutique braces for NYU," profiled Lynn Davidson, the owner of a clothing store at 309 E. Ninth St., where a gift shop now stands. Davidson said she was against the construction of the Alumni Hall and Third Avenue North dorms because she opposed the construction of high-rise buildings in the area. Despite this, she also said she hoped the future inhabitants of the student residences would shop at her store.

"There are two sides in me," Davidson said. "There's the old hippie, and there's the businesswoman."

Berman said that while there will always be issues between any university and nearby residents, NYU's expansion has created an unresolvable tension within Greenwich Village.

"The problem is that the administration of the university has this 'manifest destiny' philosophy that it believes it should take over and become the controlling presence of more and more of the neighborhood," Berman said. "It's not that we think that the university or its presence is inherently bad — we only think it's bad when it becomes the only presence in the neighborhood."

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Continued from page 1

## How Stuart Robinson's misconduct went overlooked for years

This account is based on interviews with over a dozen current and former employees and students from athletics departments at both universities and a review of legal documents, email correspondence and text messages. A majority of people that WSN spoke to for this story asked to remain anonymous out of concern for their privacy and job security.

### A Title IX lawsuit at SUNY New Paltz

Driving back from a conference, Elizabeth Student felt trapped and scared, but not surprised when her boss, Stuart Robinson — then athletics director at New Paltz — insisted that she and a colleague play a game of “fuck, kill, marry” by sorting their colleagues into the prescribed categories. This was not the first time she had faced harassment from Robinson, according to a 2018 Title IX lawsuit Student filed against the State University of New York and SUNY New Paltz.

“New Paltz chose to protect the abuser rather than their staff and students. NYU either ignored Robinson's past or was too lazy to do the proper hiring diligence to protect NYU from Robinson,” a former coach at SUNY New Paltz told WSN. “Sadly, Robinson's victims could have avoided the degradation.”

— A former coach at SUNY New Paltz

In the lawsuit, Student said Robinson would also make remarks on her appearance: “Your husband deserves you to be dressed better,” “why can't you look nicer?” “are you really going to wear that?” In April of 2016, Student, Robinson and a group of colleagues were walking back from a coffee shop when Robinson told Student that he planned to visit her alma mater and then told her

“the only thing left of you there was your name and phone number on the men's bathroom wall saying ‘Call for a good time.’”

Student reported Robinson's behavior to the university's Title IX office and human resources department, but instead of taking disciplinary action against Robinson, the university offered for Student to take a leave of absence, according to the lawsuit. Looking to escape Robinson's harassment, she took the offer. After taking her leave and exhausting any additional paid sick time, Student decided to sue SUNY and New Paltz.

The ensuing case would detail Robinson's harassment and unequal treatment of men's and women's sports teams at the university, and be the first publicly-recorded allegation of a decadeslong pattern of behavior.

The lawsuit also claimed that Robinson allotted unequal resources to and purposefully derailed women's athletics programs, such as in one case, where he allegedly refused to plow women's lacrosse fields during the winter at the same time he dedicated a large amount of funding to new facilities for men's teams. After years of proceedings, Student's case ended without a trial before a jury. As a result, the state paid Student a sum of \$200,000.

“New Paltz chose to protect the abuser rather than their staff and students. NYU either ignored Robinson's past or was too lazy to do the proper hiring diligence to protect NYU from Robinson,” a former coach at New Paltz told WSN. “Sadly, Robinson's victims could have avoided the degradation.”

Multiple people close to the New Paltz athletics department said that many staff members and student-athletes were impacted by Robinson's behavior, but that few were in a position to take legal action. Many said they made complaints to the university's human resources department or to the Title IX office, and others said they went to their union. When no action was taken, some decided to leave the university. New Paltz did not respond to questions about allegations against Robinson during his time at the university.

“The way that female coaches were treated was unheard of,” the source said. “If that was my daugh-

ter I would have hit him with my car.”

Robinson's alleged harassment was not limited to athletics department staff. Rachael Purtell, a former student-athlete at New Paltz who played for Student, said she was sexually harassed by Robinson. When Purtell reported her experience to the university's department of human resources and Title IX office, she said nothing changed. This pattern would continue at NYU.

“I observed Stuart's impact on the department in the forms of disparities in scheduling, facility maintenance, funding, and uniform quality disadvantaging the women's sports teams,” Purtell said. “This was a consensus among the student-athletes, as was the fact that sexually harassing behaviors were normalized and condoned within the department.”

Robinson's misconduct reportedly continued in his career at NYU. The university has maintained that it was not aware of Robinson's history when it hired him as athletics director. According to email correspondence obtained by WSN, now university president Linda Mills was a member of the committee that selected Robinson. Mills did not respond to a request for comment, and NYU did not respond to questions about Mills' role in Robinson's hiring.

The university has told WSN that it used a search firm to conduct a background check on Robinson during the hiring process, which it said included looking into candidates' civil and criminal legal history. NYU said this did not reveal Student's case, which was public.

### A call to NYU

However, NYU's Title IX office may have been informed of Robinson's behavior shortly after he was hired. When Purtell learned in a New Paltz press release that Robinson was taking a job at NYU, she said she called the university's Title IX office to share her experience with the former director.

“I called NYU's Title IX office to inform them of my own personal experiences and observations of Stuart's behavior in the hope that having my conversation on record with them would enable them to more efficiently and effectively

address his sexist and harassing behaviors when he inevitably repeated them at NYU,” Purtell wrote to WSN.

Purtell's conversation with NYU's Title IX office was first reported by The New Paltz Oracle. NYU declined to comment in response to questions about Purtell's call. Within the year, multiple complaints about Robinson were allegedly brought at NYU, and according to multiple sources close to the department, they were dismissed. People close to the department said Robinson would belittle his colleagues and make sexualizing remarks.

Multiple people left the department after they raised maltreatment complaints about Robinson, while others chose to remain. Sources close to the department said a pattern emerged — employees would come forward with complaints about Robinson and human resources representatives would disparage and discourage them from speaking out. Then, a human resources representative would allegedly share the content of the reports with Robinson.

Matt Huck, senior associate athletics director for internal operations and compliance human resources representative for the department, had what many sources described as a close friendship with Robinson. When complaints of sexual harassment, inappropriate behavior or gender discrimination involving Robinson would arrive at Huck's office, he allegedly minimized employees concerns.

People close to the department said Huck would remark that employees should “just suck it up,” or “work harder” and say that “Stuart can do whatever he wants.”

Huck also allegedly shared the content of reports with Robinson — sources close to the department have described how raising a complaint could lead to weeks of “being shunned” by Robinson. They also said staff were concerned about the risks of being on Robinson's bad side, worried that it might impact their athletes or their job security.

When reached for comment at his office, Huck told WSN that “we don't discuss our personnel matters.” WSN also attempted to contact Huck via email and phone call.

As more people left, the department allegedly struggled to func-

tion. Coaches would arrive to practices or games and realize that their equipment was missing, or not set up, and transportation to events went uncoordinated, leaving coaches to scramble for ways to get their athletes to competitions. Robinson would allegedly instruct staff to report directly to him, circumventing other senior staff and slowing down operations. One person described the restructuring of the department as the narrowing of a multi-lane highway down to a single lane.

“We breathed a sigh of relief”

Following complaints of sexual harassment over the summer, the university placed Robinson on administrative leave in late July. NYU did not comment on the reason for Robinson's leave of absence, but told WSN in early September that no students were involved in the “concerns” that prompted his leave.

With Robinson on administrative leave, more people began coming forward. A little over two months into Robinson's administrative leave, on Sept. 27, an announcement was sent to all athletics department personnel saying that Robinson was “no longer employed” by NYU.

“We all breathed a sigh of relief,” a source close to the department told WSN. “We had been suffering in silence.”

Shortly before Robinson's departure was announced, department staff were told that there would be changes to the department's human resources that included Huck's removal as the department representative, according to multiple sources.

“I don't know how much faith anybody currently has in the process, because of how long this went on. Without these stories coming out it is unclear that the resolution would have been the same,” one source said. “Some of the response to this has been to tear the system down, because how broken could the system be that this could happen at two universities?”

NYU has not responded to questions on when or how the search for a new athletics director will begin.

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Read this edition online

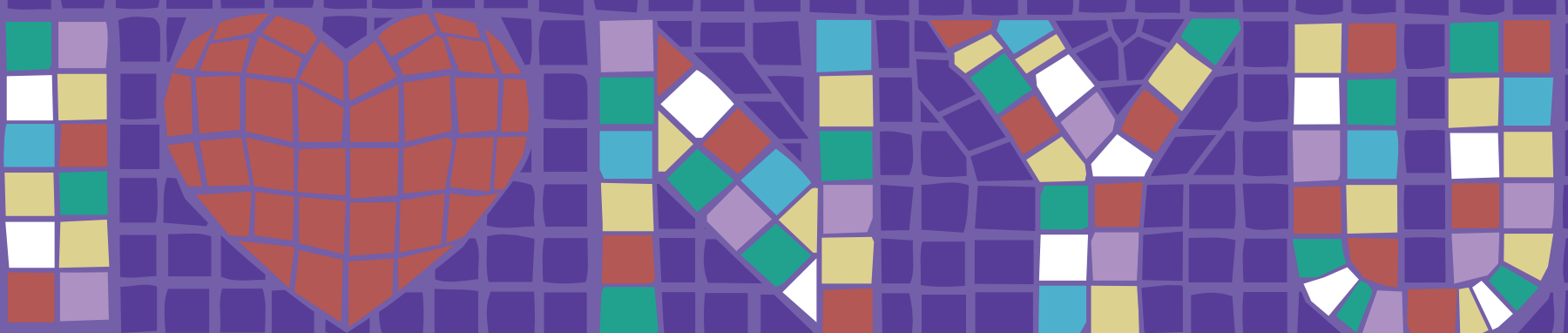




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# Letter from the Editor

It is with great pleasure and immense pride that I write to you today to commemorate a significant milestone in our publication's history. 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the Washington Square News — 50 years of relentless dedication to independent reporting, to informed discourse, to training the next generation of journalists.

Our five-decade journey is a testament to our unwavering commitment to the pursuit of truth in a dynamic world, both on and off campus. While independent, rigorous, student-run journalism is often a trying pursuit, bearing witness to the challenges and triumphs that have shaped the NYU community is both a responsibility and a privilege. It is a task that generations of WSN staff have been honored to undertake.

As the editor-in-chief, I can say that we are all honored to share this remarkable moment with you. Moreover, we are thrilled to mark the occasion with a special print edition of the Washington Square News.

WSN is consistently recognized as one of the country's leading college newspapers for its excellence in digital journalism. But there remains a power to the feeling of newsprint in one's hands. A print newspaper reminds us that — no matter what cover-ups, bias or misinformation may seek to obscure — the words of diligent truth-tellers can impress a very real mark upon the world.

Our commemorative print issue is a tribute to that journalistic tradition. Even in an increasingly digital world that seems increasingly pitted against truth, the printed word retains its power to inform, educate and inspire.

From breaking-news coverage to in-depth investigations; from thought-provoking opinion pieces to interviews with up-and-coming artists — the breadth and depth of WSN's coverage embodies the complexity of the world that NYU students are learning to navigate.

We keep the campus informed. We shape its discourse. We encourage critical thinking; we nurture diverse perspectives; we cultivate robust discussion. We tell the stories that matter to our diverse community, and we ask the questions that they deserve to know the answers to.

And it is not only the readers who benefit. Our publication serves as a platform for students to immerse themselves in real-world journalistic practice. Here, they refine their writing skills and develop their instincts as they train in the principles of objective reporting, fact-checking and journalistic ethics.

At WSN, student journalists reckon with their preconceptions and do the messy work of sifting through uncertainty. They explore a wide range of topics, engage with diverse perspectives, and confront the challenges of seeking out and conveying truth. This practicum builds on their NYU education as they work to become societal custodians of fact.

The concept of truth itself is as under threat as it ever has been. In politics, deception, falsehood and straight-up lies threaten our society's democratic foundations. In the media, missteps and equivocations — real and perceived — have earned the press disdain in the eyes of many.

Now, the endeavor of earning and maintaining the public trust through the defense of fact lies ahead. Truth will need a new generation of defenders.

College newspapers are the crucibles in which the best-tempered journalists are forged — and we need the best we can get.

Student journalism plays an invaluable role in developing the defenders of a free and democratic society. It is in these pages that the next generation of journalists will find their voices, develop their professional identities, and emerge as informed and responsible contributors to the global discourse.

However, like many publications, we find ourselves facing financial challenges. The transition to the digital landscape, coupled with shifts in advertising and funding models, has presented obstacles we are hard-pressed to summit alone. To continue our mission of empowering student journalists and informing our community, we need your support.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we invite our loyal readers, alumni and friends to stand with us. Your support will ensure that we can keep the tradition of independent journalism alive and thriving on our campus.

In the spirit of this anniversary, we encourage you to reflect on the importance of student journalism.

The Sarah Raybin Portlock Fund was established in honor of a WSN alum who served as editor-in-chief, in 2006. She was not only an accomplished journalist, but she also mentored and championed young journalists throughout her career, starting at WSN. Sarah championed student journalism as a way to inform a campus community and to provide the space and support students need to develop into thoughtful, rigorous journalists. The past and future of WSN strive to maintain the longevity of our publication and facilitate a sustainable environment for our student journalists. Your donations help us continue to provide a platform for the stories that need to be told and the facts that need to be heard — at NYU and beyond.

- the editor

Manasa Gudavalli  
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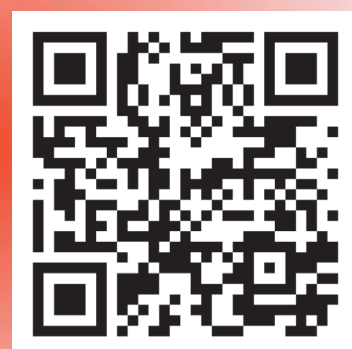
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