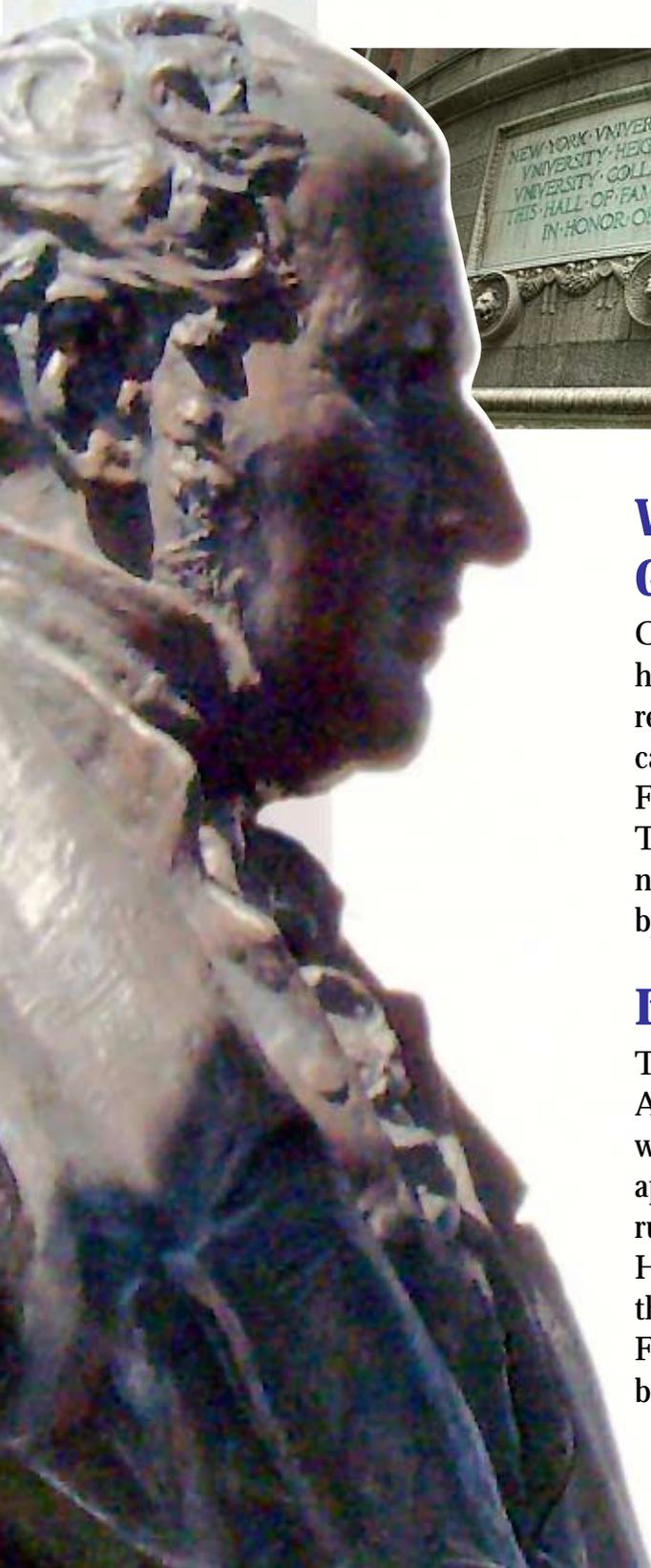




**Big Apple Greeter**  
New York City

# A GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS AND THE HALL OF FAME FOR GREAT AMERICANS IN THE BRONX



## Where is the Hall of Fame for Great Americans?

On a high bluff overlooking the Harlem River—the highest natural elevation in New York City—the residential neighborhood of University Heights and the campus of Bronx Community College, site of the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, are visible from miles away. The area is bounded to the north by the Kingsbridge neighborhood, to the south by Highbridge and to the west by the Jerome Avenue.

## It's Easy to Get to the Hall of Fame

Take either the Lexington Avenue No. 4 train or the Sixth Avenue B or D trains to the 183rd St. station, and walk west to University Avenue. For a particularly dramatic approach, take the Seventh Avenue No. 1 (or No. 9 during rush hours) to 207th St. in Manhattan. Look east across the Harlem River from the elevated platform to the college on the hill. A short walk across the 207th Street Bridge on Fordham Road and south along University Avenue will bring you to the college.



## About University Heights and the Hall of Fame

New York University is today a center of downtown culture, so it may sound surprising that in the late 1800's the trustees despaired of the bustling city rushing around their Washington Square Park (Greenwich Village) campus. They decided to move to a more rustic setting, so the university bought an estate in the Bronx on a high bluff overlooking the Harlem River and Manhattan. It was to become a pinnacle of learning. The renowned architect Stanford White was hired to design the campus and its buildings, including a classic domed library. To secure the library on the edge of the cliff, it was necessary to build a heavy, protruding foundation which, under White's inspiration, evolved into the Hall of Fame for Famous Americans. The library was completed in 1899.

With such an inspiring setting it seemed only natural to honor the men—and at first it was all men—who had helped to make the United

States great. In a small irony, among the first women nominated, unofficially, for the Hall of Fame was Dorothy from *"The Wizard of Oz."* In singing her praises one of the Munchkins affirms, "You'll be a bust in the Hall of Fame."

Through the first half of the 20th century the Hall of Fame, the campus and the neighborhood coexisted peacefully. But in the 1960's economic and social upheaval sent much of the Bronx into a downward spiral. New York University decamped to downtown Manhattan in 1973, and the campus then became Bronx Community College, part of the City University of New York.

Today the neighborhood has come a long way back. The campus and the Hall of Fame are clean and safe. The classic dilemma to visitors in New York is to visit a park or a museum. At Bronx Community College and the Hall of Fame, visitors get to do both at the same time.



## Things to See and Do in University Heights

**1** Bronx Community College campus, bustling with activity as students walk to their classes, is a mix of classic architecture and mid-century utilitarian designs.

**2** Gould Memorial Library is an architectural gem with stained glass windows by Tiffany. The marble interior is one of the largest such displays in the world. For an unusual experience stand under the very center of the dome if there are no activities under way. You will be contained in a column of sound reflected by the parabolic roof. Speak in a normal voice and notice the effect. (The library is closed on weekends.)

**3** The Hall of Fame for Great Americans. To transform the potential eyesore of the library's foundation into a thing of beauty, Sanford White adapted the Greek Revival colonnade at the front of the library to create an elegant promenade, the Hall of Fame for Famous Americans. Stroll along its gracefully curved arc to gaze at the faces of American history, which represent "snapshots" of the leaders and values this country holds in high regard.

The bust of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1973, is the most recent addition to the gallery. Roosevelt's uncle, President Theodore Roosevelt, was elected in 1950. Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright were elected in 1955 and 1965, respectively. Four honorees are waiting to have busts installed: Justice Louis Brandeis, also elected in 1973, and Clara Barton, Luther Burbank, and Andrew Carnegie, elected in 1976. Some of the names and faces you see in the Hall will not be familiar today, while some very famous personages are conspicuous by their absence. Dennis McEvoy, director of the Hall, gives free tours if arrangements are made in advance. He is only too pleased to discuss who is in and why, as well as who should be in or who should be out. The Hall is open daily 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. For information call 718-289-5161.

**4** MacCracken Hall on the north side of Hall of Fame Terrace was built in 1880 by Loring Andrews, who then owned much of the land that subsequently became the campus of New York University and Bronx Community College. In later years it was home to Henry MacCracken, chancellor of the University.

**5** St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church is just a short walk along University Avenue to Fordham Road. An outstanding example of Gothic architecture, the church stands boldly at this busy intersection.

***Greeter's Secret.** Not actually in University Heights, but certainly worth a visit, is Poe Cottage at Grand Concourse and Kingsbridge Road. Built in 1812, the cottage is perhaps the last remaining of the once ubiquitous workmen's cottages in the Bronx. Located in a small park along Grand Concourse the tiny cottage was the last home of the noted American writer, Edgar Allen Poe, author of many mysteries and poetry. Among his famous works were the poem, Annabelle Lee, and the novel Murders in the Rue Morgue. Take the # 4 train at 183d Street and Jerome Avenue to Kingsbridge Road; the cottage is just a short walk to the Grand Concourse. Call 718-881-8900 for information.*





## When It's Time to Eat

Bronx Community College's student cafeteria, located directly opposite the Gould Memorial library, is open to all.

- Jimmy's Bronx Café, 281 West Fordham Road, is very casual and family friendly.
- El Valle, 2448 Jerome Avenue and East Fordham Road, features succulent churrasco, the traditional barbecue of the gaúchos of Southern Brazil. Next door, at 2426 Jerome Avenue, is a small bakery featuring luscious cookies and pastries.
- Ebe Ye Yie, 2364 Jerome Ave at North Street, offers Pan African specialties.
- Liberato Restaurant, Jerome Avenue and 183rd Street, entices you with traditional Central American/Caribbean fare; the large portions include salad and bread.
- Also at Jerome Avenue and 183rd is a modest-sized grocery store if you prefer to pack some snacks and picnic along the campus' grassy slopes.

## Shopping

Large department stores and many discount outlets and specialty shops, particularly for jewelry and women's apparel, line Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse.

## Web Links

Gould Memorial Library

<http://www.gothamgazette.com/community/14/news/666>

Hall of Fame for Great Americans:

<http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/HallofFame/>

Edgar Allan Poe: <http://www.museumregister.com/US/NewYork/Bronx/Fordham/PoetFordham.html>

For additional information about New York City and its neighborhoods log on to: [www.askanewyorker.com](http://www.askanewyorker.com)

## About Big Apple Greeter

Founded in 1992, Big Apple Greeter's mission is to enhance New York City's worldwide image while enriching the City experience for its visitors. Connecting with business and leisure travelers from all over the United States and the world, Greeters bring visitors to neighborhoods in all five boroughs, promote tourism throughout the city, and help visitors discover the ease of using public transportation. More than 350 volunteer Greeters, speaking over 30 languages, enjoy giving their time and energy back to their hometown. Big Apple Greeter volunteers research, write and distribute the *Neighborhood Information Profiles*, a series of five page feature stories describing a New York City neighborhood in text and photographs. Since its founding, Big Apple Greeter — a free public service — has welcomed over 50,000 visitors and been featured in hundreds of newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs all over the world, reaching an audience exceeding one billion potential visitors to New York City.

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Big Apple Greeter welcomes you to New York.

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# University Heights— Hall of Fame

