

# Toasting to Tech: Administrators, alumni, and stars celebrate local technical high school at gala

November 30, 2017, Leah Lu



**FAMOUS FACES:** Actor Tracy Morgan joined “CBS This Morning” co-anchor Gayle King, center, and honoree Londell McMillan, a 1983 Brooklyn Tech graduate, for a photo.

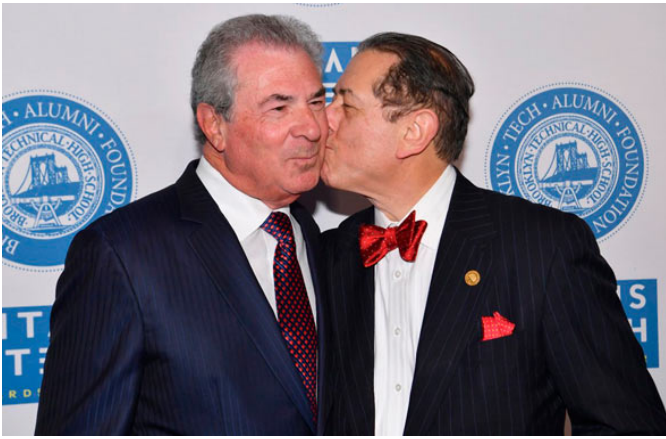
It was nerds’ night out!

Brooklyn Tech honchos and alumni celebrated the Fort Greene high school’s near century of teaching math-and-science-minded youngsters at a swanky bash on Tuesday that honored three former students, one of whom praised the local learning house for the opportunities it offered.

“Brooklyn Tech clearly changed my life. And like many others who graduated from it, I like to say that I owe much of my future to what happened there,” said Leonard Riggio, who matriculated from the school in 1958 and went on to found bookseller Barnes & Noble. “The environment itself was just so fertile in terms of encouraging learning and personal development.”

Attendees of the annual “Titans of Tech” gala trekked all the way to the outer borough of Manhattan for the party, where they sipped cocktails and noshed on dinner alongside notable special guests including comedian Tracy Morgan — who returned to his native Brooklyn earlier this year to film a new television show — as well as “CBS This Morning” co-anchor Gayle King and a robot built by current students who demonstrated the machine’s ability to toss balls into a plastic bin later on in the evening.

Members of Brooklyn Tech’s alumni foundation hosted the event, which commemorated the school’s 95th anniversary and recognized just some of the many individuals who have gone on to achieve great things following their years studying in the institution’s hallowed halls.



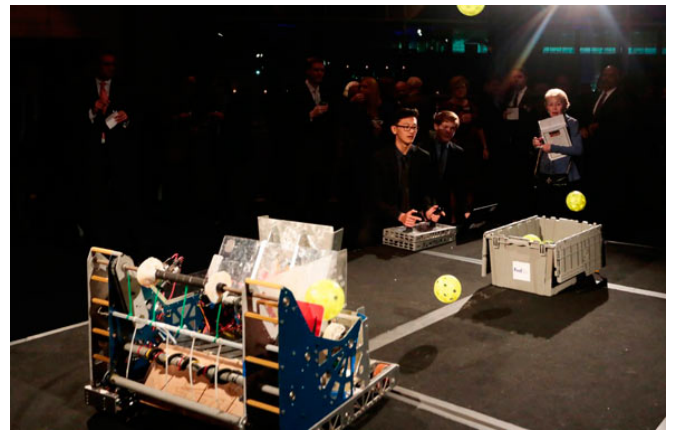
**PECKING PALS:** Real-estate executive and honoree Floyd Warkol, left, got a smooch from Edward LaGrassa, a board member of the Brooklyn Tech alumni foundation, which organized the bash.

“If you look at our grads, who are well placed in every field, you will see huge innovators,” said Elizabeth Sciabarra, director of the alumni foundation. “What we do here is place our kids in labs and college-level courses. It enables them to dig deep in the subject. It awakens innovation and honors their entrepreneurial spirit.”



**FUTURE TITANS:** Current students at the Fort Greene high school watched as a robot they built took the stage.

The alumni group has raised more than \$30 million for the public high school, according to Riggio, who applauded it for preserving the learning house’s reputation as a leader in engineering, math, and science education. “The foundation did things the budget of New York wouldn’t and couldn’t do, such as build the robotics lab and high-tech libraries, curriculum development, teacher training, and various kinds of work-study and mentoring programs with companies in tech that alumni were running,” he said.



**CROWD PLEASER:** The robot built by students on Brooklyn Tech’s robotics team “performed” for guests at the party.

Other honorees included real-estate executive Floyd Warkol and attorney Londell McMillan, who graduated from Brooklyn Tech in 1965 and 1983 respectively.  
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