

BRONX NEWS

THEIR HARD WORK

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THEY ARE considered the best and the brightest of the thousands of young men and women graduating from colleges in the Bronx. They balanced high-caliber academics by overcoming hardship, juggled family and studies, or pursued a degree to one day help the community.

Ana Uruena spent two years at college in her native Venezuela when she realized she wasn't following her passion.

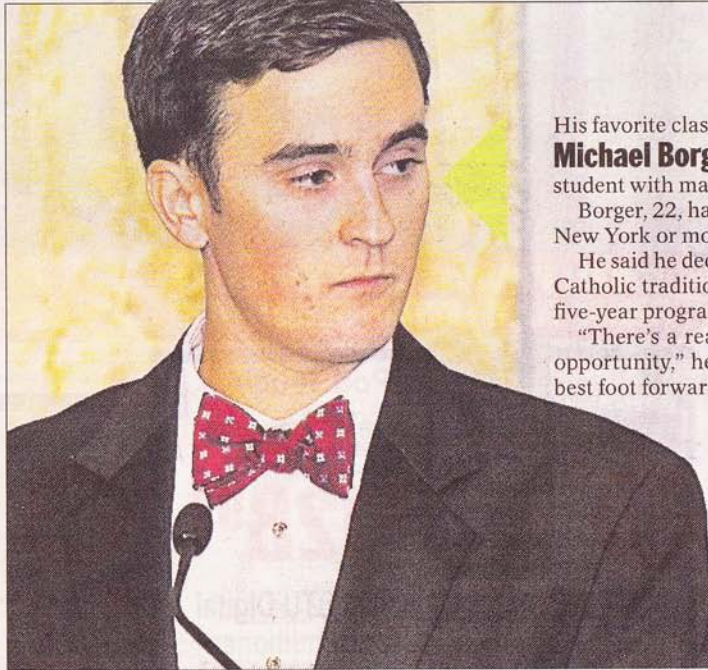
She started over at the College of Mount Saint Vincent on a scholarship, and was one of two students to take top honors in science at a national conference this year.

The 24-year-old, a member of a flamenco dance troupe, studied genetic development at Massachusetts Institute Technology last summer and dreams of one day doing cell biology research in her own lab.

"I was always more interested in asking questions and understanding why things work," she said.

Though she misses her friends and family back home, Uruena is going to pursue her Ph.D. at the University of Texas.

"I've had to work pretty hard, but I always try and balance it out with having fun," she said.



His favorite class may have been Saints of Yesterday and Today, but **Michael Berger** has come out of Manhattan College a successful student with management and finance degrees.

Berger, 22, has a passion for real estate, and either wants to stay in New York or move back home to Washington to pursue his dream.

He said he decided to attend Manhattan to continue in the La Salle Catholic tradition, and next year he is going to complete the school's five-year program with a graduate degree.

"There's a reason that everyone does something and is given an opportunity," he advises fellow students. "Make sure you have your best foot forward."

When **Ephraim Zamora** was 14, he started his own deejay business.

Though it bombed – "I was a horrible deejay," he remembers with a laugh – Zamora fell in love with the business side of it, and is graduating from Monroe College with a management degree.

"My goal is to help develop small businesses so that they can create more jobs in the community," said Zamora, who did just that as president of the school's Students in Free Enterprise.

The Castle Hill resident traveled to Guatemala about two years ago to help women open small businesses.

The 29-year-old father of three was in school full-time and also served as a bishop at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on E. Kingsbridge Road.

The Queens native will walk with honors – summa cum laude – at graduation.

"My friend asked, 'How do you do it?'" Zamora said. "I said, 'I don't think about it, I just do it.'"

