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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT RIBBON-CUTTING FOR BARRY R. FEIRSTEIN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF CINEMA

Mayor Bill de Blasio: As is evident, Rashan was chosen because of his commitment to film, because of his dedication, because of his sincerity, and because of his height.

[Laughter]

Guaranteed that no microphone change would be needed – thank you, Rashan.

[Laughter]

But Rashan's story epitomizes why Feirstein is such an important step forward for this borough and for this city. Because the magic of New York City has been that it's a place for everyone. It's a place where everyone could find opportunity. This has been a thing that really has distinguished us from so many places in this country, so many places in this world. This place for generations was a place that anyone could grow up in and truly follow their dreams. Anyone could come to here from anywhere in the world and have extraordinary opportunities available. And we know it's a moment in history where some of that is challenged because of changing economic realities. But the way you answer those changes is to innovate – it's to come up with new and better approaches that include everyone and re-spark that opportunity. And that's what's happening here at Feirstein. It is exciting that this will change the face and reality of our film and TV industry here in this city. It's exciting it will create opportunity for so many people. It's exciting for Brooklyn. And I have to say, I love all five boroughs.

[Laughter]

Truly, they're all wonderful.

[Laughter]

But would I be going too far to say there's something special about Brooklyn?

[Applause]

So, it is an especially great day for Brooklyn. Let me thank some of the folks who made this extraordinary public-private partnership happen. This shows what can happen when the public

sector and the private sector get together – really get in sync – how much can move and how quickly it can move. First of all, it’s really a pleasure when you’re talking about Feirstein, and this incredible school, and what it’ll do there, but to note that there is a Mr. Feirstein, so –

[Laughter]

– Barry Feirstein, thank you.

[Applause]

Thank you for your support and your generosity. And this is – you know, there are a lot of things that people have the honor if they work hard enough to eventually have something named after them. This one – it says something about you, that a school that’s going to do so much for so many people in this borough is obviously something that was a labor of love for you. So, thank you for your kindness, your support, your generosity.

I want to thank, of course – first, I want to say – public-private partnership – I want to talk about both sides of the coin. Some of the important work that was done was based on our commitment and the previous administration’s commitment to seeing what we could do to create more opportunity in this industry. And I want to thank our commissioner for the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, because I know this has been a labor of love for her as well – Cynthia Lopez, thank you –

[Applause]

Everyone from CUNY – our chancellor, James Milliken; and, of course, the president of Brooklyn College, Karen Gould – a great day for CUNY. I want to thank Doug Steiner, a good friend. It’s a great day for Steiner Studios as well. And this place just gets better and better, and this will be so important to everything happening at Steiner Studios and Brooklyn Navy Yard in general. I think David and Sylvia Steiner deserve some recognition as well. Thank you.

[Applause]

I mentioned the Navy Yard, which is one of the great success stories in all of New York City. I want to thank David Ehrenberg, the president and CEO of the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation. Keep doing what you’re doing. Great stuff is happening here.

I mentioned CUNY – and I should have done this in sequential order, but CUNY of course has board members. One of the board members who really is doing an extraordinary job, and I had the honor of naming her. She is shy, she is retiring, but she’s still very effective – Dr. Una Clarke, thank you.

[Applause]

And the elected officials who are here, I know they believe in this. They’ve done a lot to help it along. This really epitomizes so much of what a lot of our elected officials believe in and support. I want to thank State Senator Kevin Parker; Assembly Member – clap for them all now – Assembly Members Joe Lentol and Walter Mosely. I want to thank the chair of the City

Council Committee on Higher Education, Inez Barron; and Council Member Robert Cornegy.
Thank you to all.

[Applause]

Now, we are one of the great capitals of film and television in this country and on this earth. And we got that way by continuing to innovate. We got that way by never sitting still. And the extraordinary fact is there is more film and TV activity now in this city than ever before. We once were strong for a period of time. Somehow, some of the folks who make the films and television shows wanted to go elsewhere, and then we were rediscovered with a vengeance. And now, rightfully, people want to be here, because the talent is here; more and more, the great studio capacity is here; the stories are here; the scenes are here; it's more and more of the place that makes sense for the industry. So now, over \$7 billion dollars being spent annually in the film and TV industry. \$7 billion dollars – you can clap for that.

[Applause]

Last year, 29 TV shows were filmed in New York City. This year, 46 TV shows being filmed in New York City.

[Applause]

Now, Feirstein students – raise your hand if you're a Feirstein student. Okay, very good.

[Applause]

Feirstein students, we want you – you know, obviously you're artists and you're going to comment on the human condition. You're going to enlighten, and inform, and uplift, but you have to be a little pragmatic. So, I hope you are doing the math and thinking, if there were 29 shows last year and 46 shows this year, that means more opportunity for you. So, something's working that's going to open the doors for all of you. And we are committed to keep it working. And this is going to be a big part of it.

[Applause]

Because Feirstein's going to mean there's more and more talent – more and more talent to keep building this extraordinary industry here. Now, this is – this amazes me. This is the nation's only film school on a working lot, situated right where the action is.

[Applause]

You'd figure someone might have done it a long time ago, but New York City did it first. And we are very, very proud of that fact. And students get the best and most cutting edge approaches, but they also get the opportunity see the work being done and to do it themselves hands-on. This is what's going to make them so able to go right into this extraordinary job market around film and TV. Now, as we said, it's also going to change the face of industry, because Feirstein, and Brooklyn College, and CUNY have always committed to opportunity for all, and wanting young people from every part of our city to get a chance to be a part of this. And they will tell different

stories – they will tell different stories. They will bring their neighbors, their friends – so many people into this industry who before didn't have as much opportunity. We want this extraordinary industry to truly reflect New York City. 130,000 people in this industry – 130,000. It's an incredible thing for New York City. And we want to make sure every corner of this city is represented, and this is one of the steps that will allow us to do it.

Feirstein is also the first public graduate school of cinema in New York City, and that means that once again, CUNY is growing and adding to our city and moving with the times. This industry that this school will continue to build – it's important not just because it's so quintessential to New York City, not just because it's so respected and admired, but because it's an industry with a lot of good jobs in it. So again, we care about the artistic elements and the elements of enlightenment that come with it – this industry – but let's be practical. Again, the jobs in this industry are high quality jobs, and that means that people get to come out of the school and know they can be in a career that will be one for life.

Now, this is something Cynthia Lopez and I were talking about right before the event started. Let's look at the difference – if you come from a lot of our neighborhoods, think about some of the other film schools here, or as Rashan said, in California – it's just out of reach, it's not a realistic prospect for a lot of our young people.

Let's do a little comparison shopping, shall we?

[Laughter]

Here, for a three year degree for an in-state student – three year degree – \$59,000. That is approximately \$100,000 less than one of the other institutions in this town.

[Laughter]

\$100,000 dollars less – imagine how that's going to open up doors for our young people.

[Applause]

I'll finish with a simple point that we – as I said, we got here through a public-private partnership. We got here – great work done in the previous administration. I'm handed a note –

[Laughter]

– Thank you. We got here with great work done in the previous administration. And when we see a good thing, we know what to do, which is to add to it. So, my administration has added additional investment on top of that of the Bloomberg administration. Now, the city is up to a level of \$8 million dollars in investment in this extraordinary initiative.

And I want everyone here – all the students – to know, the great news also is, as you go forward in this work, as you portray the life of this city, as you seek inspiration, there are 8.5 million stories to draw upon. You will never lack for material. By the way, they're all my constituents. They're all very colorful.

[Laughter]

Okay, you're going to find a lot to work with.

I want to thank – I want to say a few words in Spanish, but also thank – some of them deserve special recognition because Senator Marty Golden went out of his way to get some of the resources in that – from the state, that made this possible. Let's thank Senator Marty Golden.

[Applause]

And this acknowledgement card has names on it – they're not overly easy to read. [Inaudible] Marty Markowitz, you get honorable mention. Marty Markowitz is here – still Mr. Brooklyn.

[Applause]

And which other elected officials are here? Jumaane Williams – Council Member Jumaane Williams, we thank you.

[Applause]

Did I get everyone? I get Kevin before. Did I get everyone? All right. Now, just a couple of words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I want to call for one of the other folks who really has a lot to be proud of today, and, under his leadership, CUNY just keeps getting better, stronger, finding new ways to reach more and more students. And, by the way, I always say education determines economic destiny at this point in our history more than any other point in human history. So, what CUNY is doing today is determining the future of New Yorkers more than even it did in its glorious past. So, I want to welcome Chancellor James Milliken.

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