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Queens College settles federal lawsuit over ADA violations

By **Carlotta Mohamed**

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Posted on October 5, 2018



Queens College is renovating its campus to become ADA compliant for disabled students.

Courtesy of Queens College

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By Carloffia Mohamed

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In July 2015, Kathleen Ross, a Glendale resident and disabled student with cerebral palsy unable to walk, stand, or use her legs without assistance, filed a federal lawsuit against the college for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act.

DINING & NIGHTLIFE



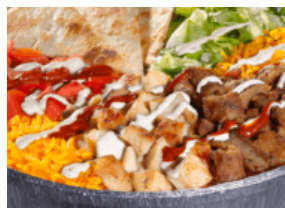
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“This is a victory for all disabled Americans, and especially for disabled students like Ms. Ross who want nothing more than to further their education,” said Ross’s attorney, Andrew Bizer, of Bizer and

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DeReus. “It is ridiculous that a major school such as Queens College is not compliant with the ADA, which was passed over 28 years ago.”

The ADA requires public institutions to provide accommodations to ensure that disabled persons can equally access and enjoy their facilities.

According to the lawsuit, upon starting classes at Queens College in 2014, Ross had great difficulty accessing numerous buildings and services around campus, including the library, restrooms, and the dining hall.

Ross alleged that the “physical barriers to access” on the campus include, ramps lacking proper handrails, restrooms with narrow doorways that lack



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proper grab bars, and campus shuttle buses without lifts for the disabled, among 400 mobility-related violations of the ADA by Queens College cited by Ross and her counsel.

According to Bizer, additionally, Ross had extreme difficulty getting on stage for her graduation ceremony, which caused her great embarrassment. In in the winter, the maintenance crew would regularly plow snow so that excess snow was deposited on accessible ramps, impeding her access to classes.

“These violations of the ADA by Queens College amounted to discrimination against Ms. Ross and other disabled students wishing to attend or visit the school,” said Bizer.



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Following the lawsuit, Queens College agreed to pay Ross \$23,000 in damages, plus her attorneys' fees and costs, according to Bizer.

"She's excited that she's able to make these changes for students and return as an alumni," said Bizer.

Some of the services and accommodations the school pledges to implement include accessible transportation in the form of shuttle buses, the installation of ramps around campus, enactment of a snow management protocol prohibiting the shoveling of excess snow onto ramps, and the addition of accessible drinking fountains, seating, vending machines, and other devices.

"Queens College actively seeks to create

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a learning environment that is respectful, inclusive, and accessible to all. The college is committed to ensuring that every member of the campus community can utilize services equally and in ways that will enable them to thrive and pursue their educational goals,” Queens College said in a statement.

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