

Others Who Struggled Against The Odds

By: *Ellis Simon*

James Faghmous, a June graduate of City College, may be one of the greatest come-back stories of all. He, literally, came back. At six years of age, while living here in the United States, Faghmous' father took the boy back to the family's home country, Algeria, and kept him there against the mother's will. Faghmous' distraught American-born mother suffered the after-effects of the kidnapping. For 14 years there, the boy had no contact with his mother, who was an assistant superintendent of schools in White Plains. But at 20 years of age, Faghmous went to the U.S. Embassy in Algiers to seek a passport. Embassy officials told him they had been looking for him and began a process that led to his being reunited with his mother in 2002. He decided to transfer to an American college, and someone suggested City College, which has a strong computer science program. He was admitted as a transfer student for fall 2003 and he fell in love with the place. At City, Faghmous played basketball, which he had picked up in Algeria. But his interests shifted to academics, and he racked up all kinds of honors, graduating finally with a 3.8 GPA. Faghmous has received a two-year National Institutes of Health grant, which will support his research into the role of beta amyloids in Alzheimer's disease. The grant comes as he pursues a Ph.D. in computation neuroscience at The University of Minnesota.



James Faghmous of City College