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Head of the class

Last Updated: 12:00 AM, May 4, 2013
Posted: 11:54 PM, May 3, 2013

Whoopi Goldberg was honored by the Public Prep Network with a classroom named for her in one of the organization's tuition-free schools, even though the actress and "The View" host never graduated from high school. "I actually didn't go to school," Goldberg, who dropped out at 17, told students on Tuesday. "I feel a little funny having a classroom named after me. . . But that's OK because I was educated by my mother, and she was a teacher." Goldberg, who discovered later in life she had dyslexia, added, "Everybody just thought I was a strange child, but my mother didn't think there was anything strange about me, because she was a strange woman, too."



Whoopi Goldberg

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Caroline earned her ashes

CAROLINE Kennedy arrived at the Monkey Bar with ashes on her forehead yesterday. Coming from St. Patrick's Cathedral after Ash Wednesday Mass, she confessed she had to go to two churches in the morning because, "I missed the first service . . . I'm going to give up cookies for Lent," she told us at the Public Prep Network Namesake Luncheon. "And I'm trying to be a better person." Would she resist meat? "Depends on what they're serving," she quipped. Later, we asked Kennedy about her passion for education reform, and whether she's considered running for office to change the system. "I don't know," she said, declining further questions. Others at the lunch for Public Prep, a nonprofit that runs girls' charter schools and will soon open one for boys, included former Schools Chancellor **Joel Klein**, who introduced Kennedy, **Joan Ganz Cooney**, **Liz Abzug**, **Celerie Kemble** and **Boykin Curry**, **Laura Weil** and **Holly Peterson**.



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On snow days, Klein had flaky call

Joel Klein declared only a handful of snow days in his 8½-year reign as New York City schools chancellor. Yesterday, he said one of them was to make good on a promise he made to **Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's** son, **Jack**.

Klein told the story yesterday when he introduced Caroline as guest of honor at a luncheon for Public Prep, a group that has founded three charter schools here.

Klein hired Kennedy Schlossberg as the public schools' chief fund-raiser, and after he noted she'd been instrumental in raising close to \$500 million in philanthropic support, he went on to reveal "the secret" of how he got her to take the job.

Klein, whose wife, Sony general counsel **Nicole Seligman**, befriended Caroline at Harvard, said that soon after he was named chancellor in 2002, he visited

Kennedy **Schlossberg** in Martha's Vineyard.

"I walk into the cottage, and there's young Jack ... waiting for me," Klein said at Monkey Bar in midtown.

"I understand you're running the schools in New York City," Klein said the boy told him, then added: "I want to know one thing: Do you declare snow days?"

"That's probably the most important power I have," Klein replied.

"Will you declare a snow day on my birthday?" asked Jack, born Jan. 19, 1993.

Although the boy was in a private school, Klein told us that even at his

tender age, "he knew that a snow day for the public schools" meant "a snow day for the private schools" as well.

Klein told the crowd he made a deal with the junior politician: "If you get your mother to join me in what we're trying to do in New York City, I'm going to give you a snow day — if it remotely snows."

"Seven years later," Klein told the crowd he hadn't made good on

"my side of the bet," even though Jack was "reminding me, like, all the time."

But it would be Jack's mother who called in the favor. On a day when it was "really snowing bad," Klein said Caroline

phoned him and said, "It's not [Jack's] birthday, but he's got a paper due tomorrow. A snow day would be awfully rich right now." He added that one of the "snow days I declared was that."

According to a Department of Education spokeswoman, Klein closed public schools due to inclement weather — but not necessarily snow — on Jan. 28, 2004, March 2, 2009, and Feb. 10 and 26, 2010.

Kennedy Schlossberg, whose forehead bore an Ash Wednesday smudge, laughed and said the story was "totally true."

She was more reticent when, after we pointed out the packed room that had turned out for her, we asked the short-lived U.S. Senate candidate if she'd consider running for office again. "I'd love to use all this power for education," she replied with a wry smile, then told us we needed "more interesting questions."



CRAIG WARGA/DAILY NEWS

Caroline: A flurry of interest