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## For Senator Schumer, a Chance to Relive a 1960s Quiz Show Triumph

By [SAM ROBERTS](#)

He remembers that he helped his team win the New York City finals by identifying the pigment in white paint (titanium dioxide), but forgets what question cost his team the regional championship.

Next week, Chuck of James Madison in Brooklyn, now United States Senator [Charles E. Schumer](#), will join his teammates to commemorate the 40th anniversary of their appearances on "It's Academic," a trivia competition for high school students.

The program was the television debut for a 16-year-old who hoped to study organic chemistry, but would go on to become more politically involved at [Harvard](#), attend law school and become a politician famous for never meeting a television camera he didn't like.

Mr. Schumer said that friendly basketball games aside, the regional was the last contest he ever lost.

Madison — whose distinguished alumni include two other incumbent senators, [Norm Coleman](#) of Minnesota and Bernard Sanders of Vermont, as well as the comedians Chris Rock and Andrew Dice Clay — defeated Flushing High for the citywide championships (its captain, Martin Olesh, is now a lawyer in Queens) but lost the regional to Plainview-Old Bethpage.

Flushing's defeat "was mainly attributable to Chuck Schumer," said Dr. Mark Cannon, a member of the Flushing team who is now a psychiatrist and a concert pianist.

"He was bright and poised," said David Glenwick, the Plainview-Old Bethpage team captain and now a psychology professor at [Fordham University](#). "I'm not shocked that he went on to even greater glory than 'It's Academic.'"

Sophie Altman, who created the program in 1961 and still produces a version that is broadcast in Washington and other cities, organized the reunion of Mr. Schumer's teammates and some of their rivals, which will be held next week in Mr. Schumer's Washington office.

"I knew more trivia than they did, but they were both smarter than me," Mr. Schumer, who was fast on the buzzer, said of his two teammates.

One of them, Barry Levine, is now an acupuncturist in a Boston suburb, and said of Mr. Schumer: "There are a lot of people you meet who are unctuous and political types. He wasn't that kind of a guy."

Their other teammate, Janet Schwartz, who also attended Harvard, now practices psychiatry in Allentown, Pa.

"He wasn't that politically involved in high school; he thought the government should know what it's doing," Dr. Schwartz said. "It's not like I would have said, 'He'll be a senator,' but I don't think anybody was surprised."

Mr. Schumer said he did not remember the question that cost his team the regional. "I guess I psychologically blocked it," he said.

Nor does his 78-year-old mother remember it, though he recalled that she said recently: "All I remember is, it's one you should have known."

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