



Photo credit: Albany Press, 1984.

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Gene A. Norman testifying in 1984 to protect the NYC Landmarks Law.

LANDMARK WEST!

Celebrates

Gene A. Norman

*on the occasion of LW's 30th anniversary and
the 25th anniversary of the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District*

Monday, December 14, 2015

Fourth Universalist Society

New York City

GENE A. NORMAN

In 1989, the *New York Times* described Gene A. Norman as “**the seemingly imperturbable center of some of the toughest building battles of the last five years.**” As Chair of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission from 1983 to 1989, Gene led the drive to designate dozens of Broadway theaters and the denial of plans to build towers on the sites of the New-York Historical Society and St. Bartholomew’s Church. He made the systematic study and protection of the Upper West Side (home to only 337 official landmarks in 1985) a priority of his tenure, designating individual landmarks including the Century, San Remo, Beresford and Eldorado Apartments. He also chaired the public hearings for the West 71st Street and original Riverside-West End Historic Districts.

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis wrote Gene in 1987, “The special character and architectural richness of Central Park West and its environs are apparent to all who walk its streets. The twin towers of Central Park West and the blocks of marvelous row houses are truly a civic treasure...” Starting at 10am on January 11, 1988, Gene presided over a marathon 16-hour public hearing, here at the Fourth Universalist Society, on the proposed **Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District** (officially designated in 1990 with over 2,000 buildings, one of NYC’s two largest historic districts).

Eight Things You Didn’t Know About Gene

Gene was born in St. Thomas and raised in New York City—first on the Lower East Side, then in Harlem and finally the Bronx, where he still lives

Gene grew up across the street from a girl named Juanita,
to whom he’s been married for 56 years

Gene served in the U.S. Marines for eight years

Gene graduated from Pratt Institute
(attended under the Korean War GI Bill)

Gene won an acting award for playing *Cyrano*

Gene takes piano lessons from the guy who plays near the escalators in Nordstrom’s

Gene is a passionate “amateur” photographer

Gene is helping to spearhead *Save Harlem Now!* — a new preservation advocacy group

EVENING'S PROGRAM

WELCOME

Kate Wood
LANDMARK  WEST! *President*

Toast by William E. Davis, Jr.
Architect, Former Landmarks Preservation Commissioner

SPEAKERS

Zoe Norman-Hunt
Reading of a letter from General Colin Powell

Proclamations by
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, *Manhattan Borough President*
Hon. Bill Perkins, *New York State Senator*
Hon. Richard N. Gottfried, *New York State Assembly Member*

Gene A. Norman
Architect, Former Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission

Cocktails, jazz & hors d'oeuvres

Pauline Jean Trio
provides musical ambiance

FAN MAIL

“As I was being elected to the NYS Senate in 1985, Gene Norman was ascending to the Chairmanship of the Harlem Urban Development Corporation; one of his stunning achievements in the field of Urban Planning, Economic Development Land Marking and Public Service. Possessing a rare combination of skills others might refer to Gene’s achievements as pale when measured with his grace and humility when interacting with others. Only over shadowed by his wonderful wife Juanita, who was the first person to hire me for a job 40 years ago, he remains a stalwart for innovation and achievement all around the State of New York.”

David Paterson, 55th Governor, New York State

“Gene Norman served New York City with great distinction, as Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission under Mayor Ed Koch as well as its Bronx representative to assist the transition during my administration. To a fellow Marine and good friend from Harlem, congratulations on this richly deserved honor.”

David N. Dinkins, 106th Mayor, City of New York

“I am proud to congratulate my friend Gene for this well-deserved recognition. Gene Norman fought tirelessly to secure affordable housing and keep our families and communities together. The buildings in New York City are time capsules of our community, and we are all indebted to Gene for preserving its character and legacy for future generations.”

Congressman Charles B. Rangel

“Gene Norman should get a separate award for so regularly considering the many proposals designed to protect the West Side from tearing down the buildings that are the core of our history and our character. Gene dealt well with passionate advocates for buildings, for streets and for communities. His demeanor stood him well in moving among activists, planners and owners toward the light at the end of [most] tunnels. Congratulations, Gene.”

Ruth W. Messinger, former NYC Council Member and Manhattan Borough President

“Gene Norman has obviously been a stalwart in the preservation of New York City’s architectural legacy, but he has also been a role model who gave me sage advice as I was starting my public service. I salute him.”

**Kenneth J. Knuckles, Vice Chair of the NYC Planning Commission
& President of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone**

“It’s quite appropriate that we’re honoring Gene Norman just as the new *Star Wars* movie is about to be released. Gene has carved out his own hero’s journey in fighting so long and so hard and so effectively for a liveable New York. He never gave up even when facing a horde of Darth Vaders. They surround us today, casting dark shadows on Central Park and scheming as ever to make the city over in their image. Gene has shown us how to stand up for our neighborhoods. His example is a landmark in its own right. Thank you, Gene, for your courage and leadership.”

Bill Moyers, journalist and Upper West Sider

MORE FAN MAIL

“Gene was an unusually perceptive and thoughtful LPC chair, a stalwart man with a good eye and an even hand. A good friend, I am pleased and privileged to know him and to have served under him.”

Charles A. Platt, architect and former NYC Landmarks Preservation Commissioner

“Regardless of the brouhahas that sometimes percolate in civic life, Gene Norman remains in my memory an honored and beloved colleague. As a fellow commissioner, did anyone work as hard as Gene to learn and serve the beauty of the city? While chairing public hearings, he treated every speaker—from a bodega or a penthouse suite—with an evenhanded graceful civility. It made one proud to sit beside him in the open democratic colloquy.”

Anthony M. Tung, architect and former NYC Landmarks Preservation Commissioner

“Gene was the most evenhanded boss I ever had. Always reasonable, always calm, always deliberate. With all the craziness and pressure of city bureaucracy and day-to-day Landmarks business, his rational leadership made a huge difference. Thanks, Gene!”

Frank Sanchis, former executive director of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

“Thinking back on the mid-80s, when AIDS was just starting to be acknowledged in any serious way, one of my most enduring memories of LPC is of the entire staff crowding into that awful conference room at 20 Vesey Street and Gene, equipped with whatever facts were available and a great deal of courage and compassion, holding an open and informative discussion. It was then that I really understood he was a leader.”

Janet Adams Strong, former NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission staff researcher

“Gene Norman deserves the respect and thanks of the professional theater and theater goers everywhere. Without his careful leadership in the application of the Landmarks law to the Broadway theaters, the Theater District, alive with creative energy as we know it today, would not exist.”

Jack Goldstein, former executive director of Save the Theaters

“Thanks to Gene, the great theaters of Broadway are legally protected and insured for life.”

Roberta Brandes Gratz, writer and NYC Landmarks Preservation Commissioner

“Sometimes history is made in unexpected ways. When Gene Norman was appointed as LPC Chair, hopes were high that the Commission's Harlem survey would result in significant designations there. Circumstances deemed otherwise. Gene rose to such challenges as the Broadway theater destruction crisis and designating Rockefeller Center. He led the way for extensive protection of the then-overlooked Upper West Side. These were laudable accomplishments. Now, picking up on the job he started in Harlem long ago, Gene is helping to launch *Save Harlem Now!*. Like so many others our gratitude to Gene, like our love of our city's heritage, and our admiration of this dedicated man, is immeasurable. Thank you Gene.”

Michael Henry Adams, author and preservation advocate

ON GENE'S WATCH (1983-1989)

Individual Landmarks Designated

Bronx

(Former) 50th Precinct Police Station
614 Courtlandt Avenue Building
1857 Anthony Avenue House
Public School 31
University Heights Bridge

Brooklyn

8200 Narrows Avenue House
Alhambra Apartments
Carroll Street Bridge
Cyclone
Imperial Apartments
Public Bath No. 7
Public School 73
Renaissance Apartments

Manhattan

(Former) 30th Police Precinct Station House
1025 Park Avenue
160 East 92nd Street House
354 Central Park West House
355 Central Park West House
369th Regiment Armory
55 White Street
Algonquin Hotel
Alvin Theater (Neil Simon Theater)
Anshe Slonim Synagogue
ANTA Theater (originally Guild Theater, now Virginia Theater)
B. Altman & Company Department Store Building
Bank of the Metropolis
Barymore Theater
Beaux-Arts Institute of Design
Belasco's Stuyvesant Theater
Beresford Apartments
Booth Theater
Broadhurst Theater
Bryant Park Studios
Bush Tower
Century Building
Century Apartments
Chatsworth Apartments and Annex
Cort Theater
Eldorado Apartments
(Former) Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank Building
Erlanger Theater (Saint James Theater)
Everett Building
Forty-Sixth Street Theater
Forward Building
Fred F. French Building
Fuller Building
Gainsborough Studios
General Electric Building

Germania Life Insurance Building
Gorham Building
Graham Court Apartments
Harry B. Hollins Residence
Hearst Magazine Building
Henry Miller Theater
Hotel Belleclaire
Hudson Theater
John B. & Isabella Leech House
Knickerbocker Hotel
Lincoln Building
Little Theater (Helen Hayes Theater)
Longacre Theater
Lucy D. Dahlgren House
Lunt-Fontanne Theater
Majestic Apartments
Majestic Theater
Mansfield Theater, now the Brooks Atkinson Theater
Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company Building
Mark Hellinger Theater (Hollywood Theater)
Martin Beck Theater
Mechanics' and Tradesmen's Institute
(Berkeley School, General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen)
Music Box Theater
(Former) New York Bank for Savings
New York Central Building (Helmsley Building)
New York County Courthouse (Tweed Courthouse)
(Former) New York Life Insurance Building
New York Stock Exchange
No. 254-260 Canal Street
Normandy Apartments
Paramount Building
Plymouth Theater
Rizzoli Building
Rockefeller Apartments
Rockefeller Center*
Rodin Studios
Royale Theater
Saks Fifth Avenue
San Remo Apartments
Shively Sanitary Tenements (Cherokee Apartments)
Shubert Theater
St. Regis Hotel
Starrett-Lehigh Building
Sun Building
Theater Masque (Golden Theater)
(Former) Tiffany Building
Trinity Building
Union Building
U.S. Realty Building

Queens

102-45 47th Avenue House
Louis Armstrong House

Staten Island

Dorothy Valentine Smith House
Ernest Flagg's Todt Hill Cottages: Bowcot
Ernest Flagg's Todt Hill Cottages: McCall's Demonstration House
Ernest Flagg's Todt Hill Cottages: Wallcot
John King Vanderbilt House
Manee-Seguine Homestead
Public School 20 Annex
Rossville A.M.E. Zion Church Cemetery
Seaman's Retreat: Main Building
Seaman's Retreat: Physician-in-Chief's Residence

Upper West Side Individual Landmarks Heard
(there were many more citywide!)

First Battery Armory
Prentiss House
Kleeberg House
Diller House
Sutphen House
103, 104, 105, 107-109 Riverside Drive
332 W. 83 St. Houses
316, 318, 320, 322, 324, 326, 329, 331, 333, 335, 337 West 85th Street
Claremont Stables
Trinity School, including former St. Agnes Parish House
Charles A. Vissani House
New York Free Circulating Library
Marseilles Hotel
Master Building

Historic Districts Designated & Heard

Bronx

Morris Avenue Historic District
Riverdale Historic District (heard)

Brooklyn

Cobble Hill Historic District Extension

Manhattan

Gramercy Park Historic District Extension
Ladies' Mile Historic District (heard)
Riverside Drive-West 80th-81st Street Historic District
Riverside Drive-West End Historic District (heard)
St. Mark's Historic District Extension
Tribeca Historic Districts
South Street Seaport Extension (heard)
Tudor City Historic District
Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District (heard)
West 71st Street Historic District (heard)
West End - Collegiate Historic District

Staten Island

New York City Farm Colony- Seaview Hospital Historic District

Interior Landmarks Designated

Manhattan

Alvin Theater (Neil Simon Theater)
Ambassador Theater
Barymore Theater
Belasco's Stuyvesant Theater
Biltmore Theater
Booth Theater
Broadhurst Theater
Cort Theater
Embassy Theater
Erlanger Theater (Saint James Theater)
Former Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank Building
Forrest Theater (later Coronet Theater, now Eugene O'Neill Theater)
Forty-Sixth Street Theater
Fred F. French Building
Fuller Building
Hammerstein's Theater (Ed Sullivan Theater)
Hudson Theater
Imperial Theater
International Building (Rockefeller Center)
Little Theater (Helen Hayes Theater)
Longacre Theater
Lyceum Theater
Majestic Theater
Mansfield Theater (Brooks Atkinson Theater)
Mark Hellinger Theater (Hollywood Theater)
Martin Beck Theater
Music Box Theater
(Former) New York Bank for Savings
New York Central Building (Helmsley Building)
New York County Courthouse (Tweed Courthouse)
New York Life Insurance Company Building
Palace Theater
Plymouth Theater
RCA Building (Rockefeller Center) Interior Lobby
Royale Theater
Shubert Theater
Theater Masque (Golden Theater)
Winter Garden Theater

Queens

RKO Keith's Flushing Theater

Staten Island

Lane Theater

Scenic Landmarks Designated

Manhattan

Fort Tryon Park



GENE A. NORMAN & THE BROADWAY THEATERS

Gene Norman arrived as Chair at the Landmarks Commission in 1983, appointed by Mayor Ed Koch to take the reins from former Chair Kent Barwick. I still remember the suspense – candidate rumors had been circulating for weeks. And then Kitty Flood, Kent's secretary, came out and announced: "I know who it is – it's Norman!" Norman? Norman who? It didn't lessen the confusion that our executive director's name was Lenore Norman. And then Kent brought Gene Norman around to meet the staff.

Many of us took this as proof that the Mayor liked very tall Landmarks chairmen.

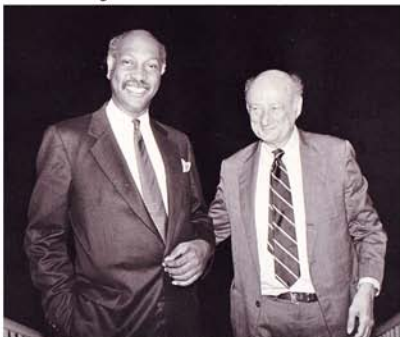
Gene arrived just in time to inherit a number of major Landmarks battles. In some of these – like the battle over a proposed tower on the site of St. Bart's Park Avenue community house – he had no choice. But Gene also took on major battles he could have avoided. In particular, the Commission had held public hearings in 1982 on some two dozen Broadway theaters. This was another contentious issue, involving powerful forces, notably the Shubert Organization, as well as a Planning Commission initiative to shift midtown office-building development from the east side to the west side – the theater district. Five theaters had recently come down to make way for the Marriott Marquis hotel. Another new chairman might have said, "not my priority." Instead, Gene took on the very public battle, locking horns with the Shuberts' Gerald Schoenfeld; dealing with the politics of the New York City Board of Estimate; figuring out technical fixes – like underlining significant features called out in designation reports – that would ease the regulatory burden. That battle lasted throughout Gene's tenure, but he saw it through.

That battle – plus St. Bart's – should've been enough for any one Chairman. But Gene also took the Commission through the calendaring, hearing or designation of so many now iconic landmarks and historic districts: Ladies' Mile, Tribeca, Tudor City, not to mention huge districts here on the Upper West Side. And the list goes on (and does, on pages 5 & 6 of this program).

In the three decades since Gene's tenure at the Landmarks Commission, New York has undergone a physical renaissance. The Times Square theater district is one of the most conspicuous success stories. No further Broadway theaters have been demolished, and many theaters have undergone spectacular restorations. A December 1, 2015, New York Times article credited Gerald Schoenfeld as having led the way. Not a word about the Landmarks Commission's role. But those of us who were there know what Gene did – for the theaters, for the Commission, and for New York City.

Tonight's celebration is long overdue.

Anthony Robins, former NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission Survey Director



Gene A. Norman with Mayor Ed Koch.

*"...nothing less than the survival of
Broadway was at stake."*

New York Times, 3/12/1988

EVEN MORE FAN MAIL

"In this wonderful year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Landmarks Law (1965-2015), the 25th anniversary of the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District, and LANDMARK WEST's 30th anniversary, it's been pleasing to see people come together in appreciation of what has been achieved. And like any family party or class reunion our sense of camaraderie leavened with a little amnesia has gotten us past old disappointments and the affection in the air is palpable.

"Of course mistakes have been made (my own will be detailed in a death bed confession to Tony Wood's archive) but on the whole all concerned may smile with pride that our beloved city remains splendid and sensuous and inspirational.

"New York's still surprising success in preservation is due to a good law executed wisely and street-wisely. In thinking about my friend Gene Norman and why he deserves our toasts tonight some city-changing struggles come to mind. The first was his masterful negotiation with the owners of the Broadway Theatres. New York wouldn't be New York without these jewels but for all the support of the public and the courage of the actors who fought to save them the theatres might never have been designated if Gene had not invented the sensible regulatory framework which invited continual creative use without compromising the essential elements of the protected spaces. The Theatre owners prophesized doom but now years later nobody even thinks about it. The show has gone on.

"Another long running show which Gene seemed to have the bad luck to stumble into was the pitched battle over St. Bartholomew's Church and its 'right' to be exempt from the Landmarks Law. In between the candlelight vigils staged by preservation advocates and the strong-arm lobbying the entire religious community took all the way to Albany and Washington stood the dignified figure of tonight's honoree. Following the step by step dictates of the Landmarks Law Gene and his colleagues listened carefully, asked questions, stayed up nights on end analyzing documents and, when he was ready, acting decisively. Gene's diligence and judicious manner had to be admired even by opponents and his judgment was upheld by the Supreme Court. Happily a new generation of leaders at St. Bart's is painstakingly restoring this nationally significant landmark.

"Gene's instinctively gracious way of dealing with colleagues, the public, agitated owners, subordinates and even his critics is a model of the best kind of public service. I have seen him bear up stoically under the kind of withering criticism that comes with the job. I wish I was there tonight to see how he handles a barrage of adulation. I hope he and Juanita will smile a little."

**Kent Barwick, former NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair
& President of the Municipal Art Society**



Demolition of Morosco Theater, 1982.

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To all of our members, interns and volunteers — we couldn't do it without you!

ABOUT LANDMARK WEST!

Since 1985, LANDMARK WEST! has worked to preserve the best of the Upper West Side's architectural heritage from 59th Street to 110th Street between Central Park West and Riverside Drive. Now the proud steward of over 3,500 designated landmarks (up from only 337 in 1985), we continue to promote awareness of these architectural treasures and the urgent need to protect them against insensitive change and demolition. Public education is central to our mission, especially our successful youth education program, *Keeping the Past for the Future*. The program, led by LW! staff educators and supported by your contributions, reaches approximately 2,000 students each year.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

R.O. Blechman <i>graphic design</i>	Anthony Bellov & Dayle Vander Sande <i>video & photography</i>
Norma Jean Darden <i>Spoonbread Too catering</i>	John Hart <i>photography</i>
Raphael di Tomasso <i>event design</i>	Sheila Powers & Darius Lang <i>Fourth Universalist Society</i>
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Pro Printers Printing <i>award & invitation printing</i>	Miles Robert Parker <i>artwork</i>
Wines & spirits generously donated by an anonymous "angel"	



General Colin L. Powell, USA (Retired)
909 North Washington Street
Suite 700
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
December 14, 2015

Dear Gene:

I am sorry I can't be with you this evening as you receive this much-deserved award from LW!.

You were my "older brother" and mentor as we grew up together on Kelly Street in the South Bronx. I remember playing 'soldier' in your house. I remember when you went into the Marine Corps and came out. I was impressed as you pursued your architectural career and made a name for yourself. We managed to remain closely connected over the past seven decades.

When you became Landmark Commissioner I knew that your education, your Marine background and the experience of Kelly Street would make you a standout. And you were. Your commitment to preserving our city has been rewarded by the sites still standing that might have been lost. You must feel enormous pride each time you drive past one.

You are so deserving of this award. I congratulate you and thank LW!

Sincerely,

Mr. Gene Alfred Warren Norman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Gene A. Norman".



Left to Right: Childhood friends Anthony Grant, Gene A. Norman and Colin Powell, with Barbara Walters. Kelly Street, Bronx (1995).