

eOculus

EYE ON NEW YORK ARCHITECTURE AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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Editor-in-Chief, [Jessica Sheridan](#)

Contributing Editors: Linda G. Miller • Carolyn Sponza, AIA

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Editor's Note: I hope everyone had a relaxing 4th of July. Don't let the heat and humidity slow you down from attending the many upcoming architecture events, exhibitions, and outdoor festivals.

JaneFest in Washington Square Park

By Kristen Richards



Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Robert Tierney declaring June 28, 2006, as Jane Jacobs Day.
Kristen Richards

Event: Jane Jacobs: A Public Celebration

Organizers: The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Sponsors: Center for the Living City at Purchase College, The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

Location: Washington Square Arch, Washington Square Park, 06.28.06

Politicians, preservationists, economists, and urbanists—along with about 150 community activists and local residents—gathered under the arch in Washington Square Park for "Jane Jacobs: A Public Celebration." It was a fitting location—the park was the site of Jacobs first of many victories over Robert Moses: forcing the removal of car traffic from the park. Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Robert Tierney read a Mayoral Proclamation that declared the date as Jane Jacobs Day "celebrating the legacy of a remarkable New Yorker, whose fundamental principles remain the bedrock of authentic urbanism."

There followed an impressive roster of speakers that included NY State Senator Tom Duane, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer ("We face a lot of Robert Moseses..."); Landmarks Preservation Commissioner Roberta Gratz (co-founder, with Jacobs and others, of the Center for the Living City at Purchase); and Ron Shiffman, former City Planning Commissioner and Director of the Pratt Center for Community Planning and Development.

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation ([GVSHP](#)) Executive Director Andrew Berman highlighted Jacobs's legacy with a litany of "Were it not for Jane...", and said, "She taught us to never give up." Paul Goldberger, *New Yorker* architecture critic and Joseph Urban Professor of Design and Special Advisor to the President on Urban Programs, Parsons The New School for Design, expressed his concern with the "byproduct" of such a legacy: "people who claim to agree with her, but have a very different agenda" (i.e. the West Side stadium). For Hillary Brown, AIA, LEED, principal of New Civic Works, a sustainable design consulting practice, "Jacobs introduced me to the nuanced idea of urban ecology, which integrates physical and social sciences into the urban project...[her] provocative yet accessible words and illuminating examples have helped bring economists and ecologists and executives to the same table."

A light-hearted moment was provided by Jacobs's son, Ned, who reminisced about his childhood in the Village when, as a small boy, he wore a sandwich board protesting Moses's plans for Washington Square Park: "I'm relieved the controversy about the park today doesn't involve an expressway." His thoughts on the plans to redesign the park: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The [Project for Public Places](#) has a web page dedicated to Jane Jacobs that includes her biography, perspectives on major issues, quotes, publications, links to interviews, and more.