

Landmarks Lion Remarks November 15, 2023

Frampton Tolbert, HDC Executive Director

Good evening. It is a great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of everyone at the Historic Districts Council, to honor Michael Devonshire as the 2023 Landmarks Lion.

Tonight, we celebrate an individual who is a true preservation warrior. We also come together to celebrate historic preservation in New York City, and to reflect on what the Historic Districts Council's achievements this year.

Thank you to our honorary co-chairs and our generous Benefit Committee members for your support. Each one of you in attendance this evening is an important contributor whose support is greatly appreciated.

And a huge acknowledgement to HDC's boards of directors and advisers, as well as our dedicated staff, for helping make this evening a success.

Will all of HDC's directors and advisers please raise your hands? These are the people I encourage you to speak with this evening to learn more about HDC and our crucial work preserving neighborhoods. Please join me in a round of applause for their continued hard work and dedication.

Michael Devonshire is a Lion who has touched so many corners of the preservation community—from advocacy to restoration, from public service to education. Everyone in this room may know Michael in a unique way. At HDC we know him as a passionate advocate supporting the preservation of countless buildings, as a restoration expert through his leadership at Jan Hird Pokorny Associates, and first and foremost as a dedicated public servant through his time as a Landmarks Preservation Commissioner.

His work at LPC speaks directly to HDC's core mission of upholding the integrity of New York City's Landmarks Law. In the past year alone, we have seen progress in holding the LPC to its mandate to preserve and protect the places that matter in NYC. But there is much more to do.

We've been at the forefront of concerted efforts to protect Buildings at Risk: designated landmarks threatened by demolition. Our advocacy has included a press conference on the steps of City Hall, a city-wide community-based survey identifying more than three dozen sites of concern, and a set of policy recommendations that the Landmarks Preservation Commission incorporated into their new Vulnerable Buildings Plan.

HDC has advocated for increased designations and protections of the places that matter

- pushing for the preservation of buildings that may be underappreciated like the imminently endangered 60 Wall Street interior—which the LPC has declined to move on despite overwhelming elected and community support;
- shining a light on cultural sites such as our current survey of Little Caribbean in Brooklyn or the push to add Casita Rincon Historic District to the National Register;
- strongly advocating for the retention and reuse of historic buildings as part of the city's sustainability and housing goals in the City of Yes.
- And HDC's continued press for an intelligent path forward for Penn Station, following the tragic loss of the Hotel Pennsylvania.

And as you know, HDC is the only citywide organization that reviews all major public proposals impacting designated properties that come before the Landmarks Preservation Commission. There we saw Michael's face almost every week for over a decade. That

was time well spent listening to his thoughtful commentary on proposals big and small. From window replacements to entire new buildings, Michael gave every project the consideration it deserved and exemplified principled decision-making that many at the commission relied upon.

To continue our work upholding the Landmarks Law and providing the support, education, and advocacy that historic neighborhoods throughout the city rely on, the Historic Districts Council needs YOU. Your enthusiasm and generous financial support is critically important. Thank you.

It is a pleasure to now introduce a great friend of preservation who will share more about Michael's life and work. Please welcome Franny Eberhart.

Please welcome Lloyd Zuckerberg to the stage.

Our final speaker this evening is Michael Hiller. Thank you Michael.

HDC Board President John Bacon will now present the Landmarks Lion Award to Michael Devonshire. (John to read certificate).

(Take photos)

(Michael speaks)

Thank you all for being an important part of this evening's celebration.