

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL GALA HONORING MICHAEL DEVONSHIRE
NOVEMBER 15, 2023
REMARKS BY LLOYD ZUCKERBERG

IN MY HAND IS A PIECE OF COLLEYWESTON SLATE THAT WAS MINED A FEW YEARS AGO IN A TINY VILLAGE IN ENGLAND. IT IS A SAMPLE OF WHAT GRACES THE ROOF OF WESTBURY HOUSE, A CHARLES-II STYLE MANSION IN OLD WESTBURY, LONG ISLAND BUILT FOR JOHN S. PHIPPS TO THE DESIGNS OF THE ENGLISHMAN GEORGE CRAWLEY AND FINISHED IN 1906.

AFTER 100 YEARS, DETERIORATION OF THE ROOF THREATENED THE HOUSE IT SHELTERED. AS A TRUSTEE AND CHAIR OF THE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE AT OLD WESTBURY GARDENS, I HAD SOME WORK TO DO. BUT IT IS THANKS PRIMARILY TO OUR HONOREE, THAT TODAY WESTBURY HOUSE HAS A NEW COLLEYWESTON SLATE ROOF INSTALLED BY A TEAM OF ENGLISH SLATERS THAT INCLUDED THE GREAT-GRANDSON OF ONE OF THE SLATERS WHO WORKED ON THE ROOF WHEN THE HOUSE WAS BUILT.

ONE COLLEYWESTON QUARRY EXISTED, AND IT WAS MICHAEL WHO WORKED OVERTIME TO CONVINCING ENGLISH HERITAGE TO HELP IT REOPEN SO THAT IT COULD PRODUCE THE SLATES WE NEEDED. HE THEN WORKED HIS MANY CONNECTIONS IN THE US AND THE UK TO HELP THE SLATERS GET VISAS DURING A VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD. HE ASSISTED LORRAINE GILLIGAN, THE DIRECTOR OF PRESERVATION AT OLD WESTBURY GARDENS WHO OVERSAW

THE PROJECT, TO MAKE SUCCESSFUL GRANT REQUESTS THAT PROVIDED A MEANINGFUL AMOUNT OF THE FUNDS NECESSARY TO DO THE JOB. HE ASSEMBLED A DREAM TEAM TO EXECUTE THE PROJECT, DESPITE THE PANDEMIC AND SEVERE VISA RESTRICTIONS. HE THOROUGHLY EMBRACED THE PROJECT WITH THE DEDICATION OF SOMEONE WHO OWNED IT HIMSELF. MICHAEL, ALONG WITH HIS ASSOCIATE KURT HIRSCHBERG, DOVE INTO THIS PROJECT WITH LOVE, THOUGHT, AND PASSION.

MICHAEL FIRST CAME TO OLD WESTBURY GARDENS IN 1983 WHILE INTERNING FOR JAN HIRD POKORNY AS PART OF A CARPENTRY TEAM THAT RESTORED THE 1913 PALM HOUSE. HE BEGAN TROUBLESHOOTING OUR ROOF IN 2011. HE REMAINS INVOLVED IN HELPING US WITH SO MANY OF OUR PRESERVATION PROJECTS. HOW GRATEFUL WE TRULY ARE.

PRESERVATION STARTS WITH A 'P' AND SO DOES 'PASSION.' IT IS MICHAEL'S PASSION THAT MAKES HIM SUCH AN OUTSTANDING PRESERVATIONIST.

HE SEES

- PROBLEMS AS OPPORTUNITIES,
- OLD BUILDINGS AS PLACES JUST WAITING FOR THEIR NEXT INCARNATION,
- CLIENTS AS STEWARDS AND LIFELONG FRIENDS.

I AM HONORED TO BE IN THAT CATEGORY.

CONGRATULATIONS, MICHAEL. I KNOW I SPEAK FOR OLD BUILDINGS ACROSS
THE WORLD WHEN I SAY, "THANK YOU."