

Much Done, Much To Do

Community Board Three thanks its members; residents say there's still plenty to do

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For the first time ever, Community Board Three devoted their monthly meeting to an award ceremony honoring members of their community for their service to the Morrisania, Crotona Park, Claremont Village, Concourse Village, and Woodstock neighborhoods in the south central section of the Bronx that the Board encompasses. On the evening of November 15, at the Bronx Lebanon Hospital located at 1276 Fulton Avenue, approximately 100 people, both dignitaries and community residents alike, assembled in the hospital's conference room to be feted by Marcella R. Brown, Chairwoman of the Board, with a Community Service Awards Ceremony.

John W. Dudley, District Manager of CB3 said, "In my ten years with this Board, this is the first time we've had an award ceremony." He explained that this is Brown's way of thanking the people who contributed to improving the quality of life in the community. "She is stepping down at the end of the year," he added, "and she wanted to give back to the community."

Indeed, in her opening remarks, Brown, who has served for 18 years as a Board Member, with ten and a half of those years as Chairwoman, surprised the gathering with the announcement that she would be leaving the position she has so steadfastly held. "This evening, Marcella Brown wants to give you something that you will always remember me by, and this is my give-back to you. It's not much, but it's something for me to say thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve this Board for so many years. I think I am the longest running Chair in the Bronx, and I will always cherish that," she said. However, she promised not to leave the Board itself, and Henry Hylton, head of the Board's Nominating Committee revealed later in the evening, that she is running for the positions of Parliamentarian and Sergeant-at-Arms.

Rev. Robert G. Lane, a member of the Transportation Committee and Pastor of the New Zion Pilgrim Baptist Church on Washington Avenue for the past 33 years, provided the invocation at the start of the ceremony. His committee was instrumental in implementing the construction of the bike paths located on both the Grand Concourse and on Prospect Avenue. These paths are meant to be effective in regulating the flow of traffic on these busy thoroughfares since they narrow the roadway for passenger vehicles, which often traveled at high speeds. "I love to be in a position where I can give assistance and try to create a good, wholesome atmosphere for the community," Reverend Lane, also the recipient of an award, stated before heading up to accept his award. "I try to be an inspiration to our young people and consider myself as being blessed."



PHOTO: LENORE SCHULTZ

As the awards were announced, Brown recounted her memories of each recipient's relationship with her throughout the years, and thanked them not only for the role they played in aiding their community, but for the mutual love and respect that they shared with her. Honorees included a combination of community members and those who have implemented programs within the community to improve the quality of life for its residents.

Among those in the city government who were on hand to receive their awards were

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Hon. Gloria Davis, Assemblywoman 79th District (D), against whom Ms. Brown ran

for office in 1982, and New York State Senator for the Bronx and Westchester, Larry Seabrook, whom Ms. Brown has known since he was a teenager working in the community. Also in attendance were Councilman Pedro Espada, Jr., 17th Council District (D); Councilman Wendell Foster, 16th Council District (D); Councilman Jose Rivera, 15th Council District (D); and Councilman Jose Serrano, 14th Council District (D). Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, also an award recipient, was unable to attend. His representative, Eric Stevenson, son of the late Edward A. Stevenson, Jr., who was the first Caribbean-American to serve on the City Council, accepted the award on his behalf.

Chairman of the Parks Department of New York City, Councilman Wendell Foster, who originally wrote the letter to the Borough President requesting that Brown be appointed to the post of Chairwoman in 1981 said, "Don't worry about whether people are going to applaud you or not. You must understand that it's all about helping-people, helping people, helping people."

Indeed, all the honorees acknowledged that CB3 was very influential in helping them to establish themselves in the community. "A school does not survive for 103 years without the support of the community, and it is because of this community and the Board that Morris High School is still here today and is now a landmark," said Yolanda Garcia, principal of Morris High School.

However, as B. Arthur Richardson, former Board member enthusiastically said, "The struggle is not over. It is no longer enough to sit around and say 'Gee, look at what we've done, isn't this wonderful?' We still need to remember that there's a lot more battles to be fought."

These sentiments are also a major concern of Roy Rowley, 44, an unemployed factory worker who lives in Claremont Village. "I know some people think things are getting better around here, but I personally don't see it. There is way too much drug dealing going on, and the problem lately with the rats is terrible," he said.

Unfortunately, the evening's festivities were tinged with a note of sadness as an emotional Captain James McNichols of Engine 50 accepted an award on behalf of his Company. He informed the gathering that he would not be able to stay because of the death that evening of a brother Firefighter, Kenneth Kerr, of Engine 90, a veteran of 14 years who was the first Bronx Firefighter to die in the line of duty this year.

In total 49 awards were handed out that night, but the real treat came at the end of the ceremony when, to her complete surprise, Brown was announced as the final honoree.

"I thank you all for coming and ask that you keep our brothers and sisters who are ill, and could not attend, in your prayers," said Brown in closing.