

Botanical Garden Auditorium Named For Marshall

BY THOMAS COGAN

"I'm a little embarrassed," Queens Borough President Helen Marshall said at the mid-October ceremony to dedicate the new auditorium in Queens Botanical Garden as the Helen M. Marshall Auditorium. Also, she admitted nervousness during brief remarks that included thanking the Meyer family, which has provided four generations of board membership at the garden since it was opened in 1948. But when she stood before the nameplate on the door to the auditorium itself, she was pleased to note that it is made of recycled glass—and perhaps summed up the effort she has made for the garden and parkland throughout Queens during her time in office by saying: "I love what I do."

The ceremony began outside, as the event planners' faith in good weather was rewarded with a beautiful day. Under one of the three green roofs that cover QBG's visitor and administration center and the auditorium, Executive Director Susan Lacerte briefly reviewed Borough President Marshall's career, which included directorship of the newly opened Langston Hughes library in 1969 and years of elected office in the state Assembly and the City Council before she won election as borough president in

2001. In nearly seven years as BP, Lacerte said, Marshall has secured \$75 million for parks and recreational facilities.

There are roofs that have gardens, but this 147-seat auditorium has a roof that is a garden. It rises from a point inside the Main Street entrance to the QBG, and is made up of succulent plants and pebble pathways over which QBG visitors can walk before arriving at a small porch that seems to be located just over the front-to-middle part of the auditorium below. Lacerte said that the temperature of the roof remains even, in contrast to the rising and lowering of temperatures that would cause wear and depreciation in most roofs. As a result, she said, it is estimated that the roof of the Helen M. Marshall Auditorium can last 50 years without the necessity of repair, while most roofs must be repaired in a fraction of that time.

Tim Heimerle, QBG's director of development and marketing, simultaneously announced the bench adoption program. New benches are being made for the garden, replacing some that date from the World's Fair days more than 40 years ago and others that the Parks Department has been able to spare. Contributing to their manufacture are several bench adopters, who are recognized by having their names engraved in the benches. One of the



Queens Borough President Helen Marshall admires the nameplate on the door of the newly dedicated Helen M. Marshall Auditorium at Queens Botanical Garden in Flushing. Susan Lacerte, QBG executive director, stands (l.), and at Marshall's l. is Jennifer Ward Souder, director of capital projects. Behind them are two of four generations of the Meyer family who have maintained board membership since the garden was opened 60 years ago: (l.) Willets S. Meyer, (r.) George S. Meyer.

adopters is Kenneth Lynch & Sons, fabricator of both the World's Fair benches and the current ones. The new benches are replicas of those 1960s models, being

made, Heimerle said, of up-to-date sustainable materials: powder-coated cast iron and white oak. A lifespan of 20 years is anticipated for them.

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