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NEWS

Park dedication kicks off Namesake Celebration

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Henry Hudson Riverfront Park officially received its name Friday night, as officials and dignitaries filled the park, below the masts of the replica Half Moon, in port for the occasion. What, only a few years ago, was an industrial wasteland is now sprawling park on the riverbank, and Fridays naming ceremony marked the beginning of the weekend-long Namesake Celebration, which will fill the park with activity from morning to night.

Hudson Mayor Richard Scalera opened the ceremony, framing the parks presence with both the history of the river and its first European explorer, and the future that he hopes the park represents. "The river is not just our heritage, its also our future," Scalera said, paper ruffles tied around his neck, ala Henry Hudson. "Quite literally so, in terms of the improvements this riverfront has witnessed in just the past five years, and, most excitingly, in terms of the community planed development that will follow in the next five years, and beyond."

Scalera did a little dreaming from the podium, asking attendees to picture the Half Moon docked more often in a slip of its own in Hudson's port, and a Henry Hudson Maritime Museum. "And finally imagine what something like this could mean for Hudson and its waterfront," he said, "A powerful new magnet for tourism, education, recreation, investment, commerce and quality of life. Just a dream, born of the river, that always has been, and always will be a key to our future."

Next, Benedict McCaffrey spoke, representing Congressman Scott Murphy, D-20th District, and praised the vision of Hudsonians who saw the piles of junk that covered the riverside and had the wherewithal to turn it into a park. "We honor those among us who had the vision to create this place of beauty."

State Assemblyman Marcus Molinaro then presented Hudson with an official proclamation honoring the park and said HHRP represented the spirit of exploration in New York, his district, and the city of Hudson. Molinaro said he hopes the success of the park and its potential lift people up and grow their sense of exploration, in the community and in themselves.

After a few more speakers, all of whom thanked Chairman of the Hudson Quadricentennial Committee, Hudson Alderman Ellen Thursten for her work organizing this and other events that, in part, celebrate the 400th anniversary of Hudson's voyage up the river that now bears his name.

To the sound of cannons fired by crew members of the Half Moon the curtains dropped and two brand new signs, one facing the river, one facing Hudson were unveiled. On their front runs the name of the park, and on the back informational information about the river. Both sides bare pictures of the Half Moon. All the funding for the quite elaborate signs were donated by Paul Colarusso of A. Colarusso and Son.

"I thought it was a wonderful day," Thursten said in the reception tent after the naming, "A great number of people have worked very hard to bring us to this point. Its one of the most important parts of the whole



Hudson Mayor Richard Scalera speaks at the naming ceremony for the Henry Hudson Riverfront Park Friday. Behind him, left to right, are explorer Henry Hudson (a.k.a. David Anderson of Walking the Dog Theater), State Assemblyman Marcus Molinaro R-103rd, Benedict McCaffrey from the office of Congressman Scott Murphy D-20, and the Half Moon's Captain Chip Reynolds. Jamie Larson/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

river, and its going to get better and better.”

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