Sharing New York Through the Eyes of a New Yorker

1992 to 2012
Acknowledgments

Developing this twentieth year history of Big Apple Greeter has been, in nearly all respects, a joyous project. Many wonderful individuals have been willing to share their memories about the past twenty years. In a few cases, such memories had lain quietly for some time, partially obscured by dust, until the project brought them happily to light again.

Only one aspect of the project has been a constant frustration for those of us closely involved, especially for founder Lynn Brooks. That is the absolute inability to recognize and thank each and every person who has played a role in the success of the organization during its first twenty years with anything like the appreciation that we feel. The best we have been able to do is to highlight a small handful of individuals with the hope that they will represent in some small way the countless others who played an equally important role. These include:

Our permanent staff, former and current, who have labored year in and year out, through good times and bad, to set the program up, build it into the high quality organization it is today, and keep it running smoothly;

Our board members, listed in attached Appendix I, who have provided shrewd guidance and generous support of time and money since the first board was convened in late 1993;

Our incredible volunteers, past and present, numbering more than 1,000 at last count, who have defined the unique and wonderful character of the organization through tens of thousands of individual interactions with city visitors from all over the world during the past twenty years;

Our many benefactors, including those we have honored through the years (listed in Appendix II), as well as those individuals and organizations whose generous, direct contributions of funds and in kind support have enabled Big Apple Greeter to endure and expand since 1992.

To each and every one of you we extend heartfelt thanks and ask that you accept this document as a very personal tribute to your generous contributions through the last twenty years.

Prologue

By 1992 when Lynn Brooks founded Big Apple Greeter, New York City had actually begun to emerge from the dark and dispiriting days of the nineteen sixties, seventies and eighties, but the world hadn’t caught up with that fact. After twenty five years of rising crime, catastrophic city fiscal problems, dirty streets, and a dysfunctional and graffiti covered transit system, New York’s reputation worldwide was at a low point. And evidence to support the general perception wasn’t hard to find. Central Park was a mess; Grand Central Terminal was falling apart; fires raged almost nightly in the South Bronx; and Squeegee Men clogged the major entrance points to Manhattan, reinforcing the idea that visitors were entering a lawless territory when they emerged from one of the city’s tunnels or bridges.

Unlike Barefoot in the Park and Breakfast at Tiffany’s, movies that had helped define the perceptions of an earlier era, the popular films of those years portrayed the city as a place where no one would want to visit, let alone live. Midnight Cowboy (1969), The Out of Towners (1970), The French Connection (1971) and Serpico (1973) “revealed” the seamy underbelly of a city that, for more than a hundred years previously, had been considered one of the most exciting and glamorous places on earth. And many people accepted the portrayal at face value.

Those born in the last twenty years may not remember, but during the seventies and eighties, New York City was widely considered to be so dirty, dangerous and costly that everyday commerce of all kinds was negatively affected. The city had real difficulties retaining -- let alone attracting -- corporate headquarters, and it even became increasingly difficult to persuade the best and brightest talent to live here and power the academic institutions, medical centers, ad agencies, design firms and banks that have always made the city so vibrant.

Tourism suffered apace along with its many related industries such as retailers, hotels, restaurants, airlines, cultural institutions and theaters. It is little wonder that many city residents of the time will recall hearing tacitless strangers -- and even concerned friends and family -- say something like, “How do you live in such an awful place? And why would you want to?”
BACKGROUND AS PRELUDE

Lynn Brooks was truly heartbroken by the reputation that New York City had gradually but inextricably developed during the bad years. At home, she heard about the city’s fiscal problems and sluggish economy and the hardships they imposed on many of its citizens. When she traveled she heard more unfortunate perceptions of New York, many just simply unfair, echoed in the conversations around her.

Born and raised on the Upper West Side, the child of parents who had both grown up in the city (when it was still possible to enjoy a swim in the Harlem River on hot summer days), her attachment has always been profound. She attended Julia Richmond High School in Manhattan, then dedicated to educating girls only, and moved on to two venerable city institutions, Hunter College and New York University.

Both in her education and through much of her career, Brooks had shown a deep interest in human relations, particularly in fostering understanding among different cultures. She began her career at the National Conference of Christians and Jews working on race relations and civil rights issues, both becoming high profile social issues during those years. In the late eighties, as executive director at the International Center in New York, Inc. she oversaw English language tutoring, orientation to New York City and intercultural activities for foreign students, business people, diplomats, immigrants and refugees. Plus, she had done independent consulting on intercultural issues throughout her career.

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A second defining “strand” in Brooks’s career had been her interest in and involvement with volunteers. She conceived the idea for and actually founded the Center on Volunteerism at Adelphi University, the first curriculum in the nation to provide educational and support services to the volunteer community. Made possible with a large grant from The Kellogg Foundation, this program helped define a whole new level of professional volunteerism across the country. Later, as executive director at the International Center, she and a staff of ten managed up to 1,000 volunteers, providing essential training to a host of individuals seeking to acclimate to the city.

Now, at age 59, after a successful career with an impressive list of nonprofit organizations and with her family grown, Brooks sought a new challenge. With no clear next step in mind, only one thing seemed clear to her initially: she wanted to find a meaningful new commitment that wasn’t full time -- something that would allow her some personal space for the first time in her life.

THE BIRTH OF AN IDEA

The Big Apple Greeter concept didn’t spring to Brooks’s mind fully formed. Rather, it seems to have coalesced from an association of ideas, the early support of a few key individuals and, as often happens with big ideas, a little fortunate timing. Initially, Brooks only knew that she wanted to do something meaningful to improve New York City’s image around the world -- both because of her own very personal attachment and for practical economic reasons. She also was understandably eager to use her extensive experience working with volunteers.

Drawing on her human relations background, the idea of somehow putting New Yorkers together with people from other cultures had appeal early on. Then, while traveling in Israel with her husband, well known journalist Stan Brooks, she noticed the volunteer “guides” in some hotels who provided strangers with informed, personal insights into their country, one that had had its own image issues through the years.

It occurred to Brooks that a program matching up New Yorkers with visitors from out of town – visiting business people, students, academics, and perhaps even tourists – might provide the opportunity for a unique kind of human chemistry, bringing together individuals from different places, demographics and cultures to share an insider’s view of the best of New York City.

From the outset, Brooks envisioned making volunteers a core part of her concept – little wonder given her grounding in this field. Her instinct told her there were many New Yorkers who felt as passionate
about the city as she did and would jump at the chance to “give back” in a tangible way. This was an important assumption since a large corps of “hosts” would be required if the program was ever going to have a significant impact on the city’s image. What’s more, from the start she felt instinctively that putting these hosts on salary would change the nature of the human interaction she envisioned—even if underwriting could be found to cover the cost.

The question of how to get started was answered unexpectedly. Then-Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger agreed to meet with Brooks to discuss her idea. One meeting was enough to bring crucial support. Messinger saw at once that Brooks not only had the beginnings of a creative concept that directly addressed a serious city issue, she also felt that Brooks’s background and personality were exactly what were needed to make the idea a reality.

While providing no salary, Borough President Messinger’s support came in several ways. First, she made it clear that she believed in Brooks personally at a time when Brooks had only her own energy, conviction and drive to rely on. Second, beginning in late 1991, Messinger provided a desk and basic office support services for Brooks, allowing time for the fledgling concept to “incubate.” Third, and, perhaps, most importantly, she helped Brooks identify leading individuals around the city who might provide funding and other support for the concept, and even allowed Brooks to use her name in approaching them, thereby assuring a more receptive response than Brooks would have received on her own.

Like any entrepreneur, Brooks sent out a lot of letters (on Manhattan Borough President stationery, over Messinger’s name) and began to tailor the specific features of the concept as she received feedback. While Brooks’s intent was never to focus primarily on fostering tourism in the city, it became clear early on that improving the city’s tarnished reputation could eventually help rebuild this important aspect of the city’s flagging economy.

However, this being New York, everyone didn’t think Brooks’s great idea was—well, such a great idea. In fact, on first hearing about a program designed to pair visitors with volunteer New Yorkers at no charge—and one apparently endorsed by the Manhattan Borough President—the Guides Association of New York, a consortium of individual professional guides who earned their livelihood taking visitors around New York, understandably felt threatened by the new concept. They were not alone.

Once again, Messinger stepped in. She invited Charles Flatenman, then president of Gray Line Tours and unofficial representative of the tour and guide industry in New York, to meet with herself and Brooks to discuss the situation. Like Messenger, Flatenman recalls that he was immediately impressed by what Brooks was trying to accomplish and, just as importantly, with her passion, energy and persistence.

Together they talked through the ideas behind Brook’s program, and it became clear that there was little overlap between what it sought to do and the important and well established services offered by guides and tour companies. Brooks was clear that she had no designs on taking their business. To his surprise, Flatenman became intrigued with both her and the idea. Ultimately, when the Board was formed, he agreed to join it and provided invaluable insight and counsel given his expertise in the tourist industry.
Three things were needed if the program was to continue: ongoing financial support, a dependable corps of volunteers, and a steady stream of interested visitors.

THE FIRST GREET

In early 1992 Bob Johnson, the publisher and chief executive officer of Newsday from 1984 to 1994, became aware of the emerging program and offered Brooks an opportunity to actually begin operation. Johnson felt that a gathering of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA), scheduled to be held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in early May, would be a perfect test run for Brooks’s nascent program and offered a grant that would provide the necessary funding. Specifically, he agreed to underwrite six weeks of operation, allowing Brooks just time to scramble together a skeleton paid staff and a competent group of volunteers who might share their New York with the conference attendees and their spouses.

This was a godsend for Brooks, even if it didn’t give her much time. But the question of what would happen after the funding ran out certainly loomed on the horizon. Once again, Brooks’s passion, energy and persistence came to her aid. She persuaded two young professionals to “bet on the come” and join her in the Borough President’s office. Wendy Pedowitz, whose substantial background working with volunteers was indispensable, began identifying, screening and training volunteers for the upcoming event. Cathy Sidor (then Brashich), with a strong background in the tourism industry, took on the task of clearly defining the “product” experience, identifying likely target audiences and determining how to market the program with, essentially, no marketing budget.

On May 3, 1992 the fledgling corps of volunteers assembled at the Waldorf and conducted a rather timid group of (mostly) spouses on highly personalized visits to neighborhoods of their choice around the city. Big Apple Greeter was up and running. However, the initial grant was exhausted and the tiny group of staff and volunteers was scrambling to ensure that the program had a future.

SUSTAINABILITY

It was clear that three things were needed if the Big Apple Greeter program was to continue beyond the May 3rd trial greets: ongoing financial support, a dependable corps of volunteers, and a steady stream of interested visitors. Brooks’s team, the first in a long line of dedicated supporters who have enabled the organization for over 20 years now, set to work on all three with determination.

Financial Support

Borough President Ruth Messinger and Publisher Bob Johnson had enabled Big Apple Greeter to launch, but more permanent support was immediately necessary. Part of Brooks’s vision for the new organization was to keep expenses to a minimum by covering an unusually large share of operational cost through in-kind donations. Office space and services such as phones and electricity were covered by the Borough President; the vast majority of workers, Greeters and office staff alike, were to be volunteers.

Nonetheless, a core of paid staff (including Brooks) was essential to maintain the integrity of the new organization’s strategic vision and manage the volunteer force. Plus, a certain level of normal business expenses had to be anticipated if the organization was to expand and become well established. Brooks approached a wide range of businesses that she knew stood to benefit from a burnished image of New York, not just the hotels, restaurants and theaters that had traditionally been associated with tourism. As usual, people found her persuasive -- and tenacious.

Thanks in large part to the close involvement of Joel Epstein, then an executive vice president at Chase Manhattan Bank and Big Apple Greeter’s first board chair, Brooks was able to gain access to an amazing array of important business, city and civic leaders. Together, Brooks and Epstein identified potential candidates, many of them senior business executives with a sincere interest in New York whom Epstein knew through Chase or his other activities. Epstein recalls that he worked the phones (and lunches), eventually contacting 25 or 30 potential board members for Brooks and himself to meet with. For a while, he recalls, he saw more of Brooks than he did of his direct reports at Chase.

Brooks and Epstein must have had a persuasive story to tell about Big Apple Greeter. Organizations which provided early support, financial and otherwise, included American Express, Bloomingdale’s, Bowne...
They recognized that, in a city like New York, any successful Greeter program would need to offer a range of language skills and the ability to accommodate special needs visitors.

Travel Advisory
New Yorkers as ‘Greeters’

New Yorkers are invited to participate in a grass-roots effort to boost a major New York industry, tourism, by becoming part of a network of volunteers to help visitors feel more welcome. The “Big Apple Greeter” program started this month by Ruth W. Messinger, the Manhattan Borough President, pairs volunteers with out-of-towners.

Organizers of the pilot program say that the greeters will spend two to four hours with a visitor or visiting family, answer their questions and show them not only major sights but also the stores and facilities that give local neighborhoods their special flavor. One goal is to “help mitigate some of the fears and stereotypes that result from a negative image of the city,” according to a statement from the Borough President’s office, which is staffing the program. The cost of about $57,000 is being raised from private sources. The program will last through August. Information: Lynn Brooks or Wendy Pedowitz in the Manhattan Borough President’s Office, (212) 669-2896.

This piece brought an astounding response, with literally hundreds of New Yorkers choking the phone line included in the article. In fact, Brooks and Pedowitz recall having to purchase an answering machine (this was before voice processing systems were commonplace) to handle the calls. Not only did the positive response provide a sustainable pool of volunteers for screening and eventual deployment. More importantly, it validated Brooks’s original instinct regarding the large number of New Yorkers who were passionate about the city and eager to do something to help it through its tough times.

Brooks’s previous experience had taught her a lot about what might be accomplished working with – as opposed to merely “using” – volunteers, an important distinction in her eyes. From the start, she
A journalist from Australia, put in touch by the United States Information Agency, sought a better understanding of race relations in the United States given his home country’s related issues with their indigenous people.

and Pedowitz set high expectations and developed a basic structure of guidelines and training to help assure that every visitor experience was a positive one, and thereby supported the fundamental objective of the program. They also recognized that, in a city like New York, any successful Greeter program would need to offer a range of language skills and the ability to accommodate special needs visitors.

It was also soon clear that volunteer talent would play a role in the new organization beyond the Greeter function. Joan Solon, the first volunteer, heard about Big Apple Greeter in a speech by Borough President Messinger and signed up as a Greeter. Soon, however, she was helping out in the office, writing grant proposals, bringing other volunteers on board and laying the groundwork for the fundraising events that would be needed to sustain the program long-term.

What’s more, well before there was any hope of hiring a marketing and communications professional to help develop demand for Big Apple Greeter, Joan Solon persuaded her husband Bob, a successful advertising executive, to help develop a logo, brochure and public service print ad for the fledgling organization. Ms. Solon ultimately worked with the program for ten years, ultimately becoming one of the paid staff members.

In the early years, Solon recalls, Pedowitz was a walking Rolodex with somewhere between 400 and 500 volunteers filed neatly in her brain. Having helped select and train each of them, she knew not only their names and faces but, in many cases, their neighborhood specialties and likely availabilities. Plus, before widespread Internet use made the job somewhat easier, Pedowitz kept the network together largely through her own personal equity, functioning as the connective tissue between the far flung Greeter family and the home office that set up and managed the Greet logistics one-by-one.

**Visitors:**

For a time, Big Apple Greeter was in the interesting position of having more volunteers than it had visitors. Cathy Sidor set to work on two fronts to remedy this situation. First, based on the experience with the pilot group from the American Newspaper Publishers Association, she took the necessary steps to define logistics for the “Greets,” thereby assuring to the degree possible uniform quality and high visitor satisfaction. The maximum number of people taken out on a Greet, how the Greeter and visitors physically located each other when meeting, the length of the Greet and basic safety and liability guidelines all needed to be developed and passed on to Greeter volunteers as part of the training program that emerged. Visitor feedback was collected and analyzed early on to assure the continuous improvement of the program as it expanded.

Second, Sidor needed to gain access to a steady stream of city visitors if the program was to develop the scale needed to influence attitudes about New York effectively. One early supporter of the concept, Joseph E. Spinnato, was especially helpful in this regard. As president of the Hotel Association of New York City and a board member of the city’s Convention & Visitors Bureau, he helped put the Big Apple Greeter team in touch with the right people when few had heard anything about the fledgling idea. He even assembled a meeting of the general managers of his association’s hotels to familiarize them with it, which provided an immediate, early source of visitors.

Since there was essentially no marketing budget, no advertising was ever purchased to announce the program. However, pro bono ads and articles describing the program appeared in City Guide Magazine thanks to board member Peter Insalaco, in Where Magazine courtesy of board member Merrie Davis and periodically in the New York Times.
As the basis for her strategy, Stone started by reinforcing the program’s altruistic mission among tourist industry colleagues — i.e., broadly improving the city’s reputation as an effective means of promoting economic development on many fronts, including tourism, and especially in lesser known city neighborhoods. She constantly reminded city and business leaders that, by developing more press interest in Big Apple Greeter, the whole city tourist industry was likely to benefit as “a rising tide lifted all boats.”

To that end, she worked to position the organization, with its robust volunteer network, as a valuable resource on the city’s many neighborhoods — and, uniquely, one that wasn’t selling anything other than New York City neighborhoods. As part of this, she encouraged city press professionals and foreign and domestic journalists alike to approach her for help on obscure or hard to research press ideas.

Initially, a depressing portion of foreign tourists and journalists were intent on seeing close up some of the worst aspects of the city, sometimes, Stone recalls, picturing with satisfaction the bragging rights that their mere survival would earn them back home afterwards. Some wanted to see “Fort Apache,” the beleaguered police station in the Bronx, anticipating gunplay during the visit. Others, including a group of communications students from Siberia, wanted to visit Harlem, expecting to find rampant drug trafficking, terrorists, flagrant racial oppression and abject poverty rather than the vibrant community that their articulate and knowledgeable African American Greeter shared with them.

Others brought a more objective viewpoint. A journalist from Australia, put in touch with Stone by the United States Information Agency, sought a better understanding of race relations in the United States given his home country’s related issues with their indigenous people. He thoughtfully interviewed her and his Greeter for hours as they walked around Harlem and filed a major story in a large circulation Australian newspaper.

Stone also tried more lighthearted approaches to gaining press, such as a worldwide contest that offered — what else? — an all-expenses-paid trip to New York City for the individual who made the best case for New York as the most romantic city in the world. The prize went to a Spanish man who had wooed his wife in New York. When they came to the city, Stone arranged to have Deputy Mayor Fran Reiter award them a key to the city, specially designed by an iconic local artist, Marco, at a ceremony on the Lower East Side, providing press for that often
overlooked neighborhood as well as for Big Apple Greeter. Journalists around the world picked up that story, too.

Press built steadily. By 2000, millions of impressions had been generated, with universally favorable reports and anecdotes about Big Apple Greeter, its volunteers and the city’s many neighborhoods. Exposure included not only countless travel guides, inflight magazines and travel Web sites, but newspaper, radio and TV coverage across the U. S. and in Canada, the U. K., Germany, Spain, Scandinavia and Israel. Big Apple Greeter volunteers and staff opened Good Morning, America with a song, it turned up on the front page of Investor’s Business Daily and, even more improbably, appeared on a video monitor at the Kathmandu airport in Nepal.

GROWING UP

Like many organizations, Big Apple Greeter initially had to settle for doing things on the fly just to get up and running. However, Brooks, a consummate professional and inspirational leader and mentor, saw to it that more formal structures were added as needed and always seemed to find just the right resource to help her put her plan into action.

Within the first year, Board member Anne Davis, a well-known community advocate for accessible transit, among other issues, helped develop a formal accessibility program for Big Apple Greeter, generously funded by American Express. Alexander Wood, a wheelchair user and the first access coordinator, saw to it that Greeters received training on how to welcome and respond to the needs of visitors with disabilities effectively and sensitively, developing guidelines not only for wheelchair users but also for hearing- and sight-impaired visitors.

And while it was agreed from the start that Greeters with disabilities would not necessarily be paired with visitors with disabilities, it was a happy coincidence that an early Greet matched a sight-impaired visitor, understandably nervous about an encounter with New York, with a legally blind Greeter who knew all the ropes. This early focus set an important precedent for the organization, which has continued to be reflected in aspects of the program as diverse as Greeter recruitment and training, office design and in its publications, Web site and business cards.

Another early contact and supporter was Lloyd Williams, the president and CEO of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce. First introduced to Brooks by her husband, Stan, whom he had known for many years as a journalist covering city affairs, Williams immediately recognized that he and Big Apple Greeter shared a fundamental goal: improving awareness of and interest in city neighborhoods beyond central Manhattan, for both visitors from outside the city and for city residents who too seldom strayed out of their own neighborhoods. He heartily endorsed the idea of having ordinary people from these neighborhoods, residents who knew and loved them, act as ambassadors to the visitors Big Apple Greeter attracted. Williams agreed to join the first board and also helped identify the first Greeters from the Harlem Community.

In April 1993 a formal mission statement, developed with the help of board member Elizabeth Baltz, was adopted. It was:

To enhance New York City’s worldwide image and enrich the New York City experience by connecting visitors with knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers.

- To promote New York City as friendly, inviting, and manageable;
- To bolster tourism and foster economic development;
- To create opportunities for New Yorkers to show pride in their city and give something back to the city.

This was expanded into a full strategic plan in February of 1994, also under the guidance of Elizabeth Baltz, assuring that future growth and development were kept on track. In November 1993, the organization’s 501(c)(3) Exempt Organization Certificate was approved.

In 1993, Brooks and her growing group of staffers and volunteers were provided with new space on the 20th floor of One Centre Street, the Manhattan Municipal Building, finally vacating the Borough President’s office. Despite the building’s storied design and extensive capacity, the space provided was quirky to say the least, including within its narrow confines the Manhattan Borough’s collection of maps and its cartographer, the Office of the Borough Historian and a large collection...
The program has enjoyed an impressive volunteer retention rate from year-to-year; roughly 20 active Greeters have continued with the program since its inception 20 years ago.

In 1996 Brooks made her first “consulting” trip for Big Apple Greeter, to Melbourne, Australia, where there was interest in starting a similar program with volunteer greeters. This provided an early validation that the Big Apple Greeter concept could be extended effectively beyond New York City to a much wider arena.

In February 1998 current executive director Alicia Pierro joined the organization as volunteer coordinator, replacing Wendy Pedowitz, who had originated the position and built the volunteer organization from the ground up. Pierro’s first challenge was to fill the vacuum left by Pedowitz’s departure, maintain the esprit de corps of the volunteers and continue the high standards of quality Greets that had always been upheld.

In the years that followed, a more formalized program emerged, designed to help maintain the strength and quality of the crucial community of volunteers. This eventually included regular recognition events and update sessions; a Greeter newsletter; and the weekly, email-based Easy Visit Hotline providing a comprehensive list of visitors seeking Greeters during the upcoming four-week period. It also included periodic Greeter outings, arranged by indefatigable volunteer Bobbie Gold, which allowed Greeters to exchange best practices and learn about city neighborhoods beyond their own favorites. Largely as a result, the program has enjoyed an impressive volunteer retention rate from year-to-year; roughly 20 active Greeters have continued with the program since its inception 20 years ago.

In 1998 Big Apple Greeter was given the Service to New York Award by the Harlem Visitors & Convention Bureau, acknowledging its work in familiarizing city visitors with that historic and often misunderstood neighborhood.

By 1999 27,141 individual visitors had been greeted since the inception of the program, according to Bill Niles, Big Apple Greeter’s official...
The program ... continued to be a magnet for journalists across the U. S. and around the world, attracted by the positive, friendly and quite unique concept of volunteer New Yorkers welcoming visitors to the city they loved.

In July 1999 the Metropolitan Transportation Authority presented a Community Service Award to Big Apple Greeter acknowledging its dedication in welcoming visitors to New York and enhancing “the reputations of our city and its people” and “building bridges of friendship between strangers, communities and countries.”

In May 2000 the Bronx Tourism Council presented Big Apple Greeter with an award commending its support in developing tourism in that borough. In July 2000 Mayor Giuliani and the City Council recognized Big Apple Greeter and its volunteers, commending them for being “wonderful ambassadors for the Capital of the World.”

In April 2001 insurance giant MONY (now part of AXA Financial) named Big Apple Greeter a V.I.P. finalist in their Volunteer Incentive Program, a one-of-a-kind public private partnership which recognized the special contribution made by employed volunteers and the organization’s “valuable effort to increase the quality of volunteerism in our community.”

By 2002, as the program entered its second decade, it continued to be a magnet for journalists across the U. S. and around the world, attracted by the positive, friendly and quite unique concept of volunteer New Yorkers welcoming visitors to the city they loved. The intriguing insights of Greeters into a seemingly infinite number of city neighborhoods captured the imagination of readers worldwide. The fact that anything so valuable was actually to be had free in New York City continued to amaze.

In 2002, Big Apple Greeter teamed with the Make-a-Wish Foundation of Metro New York and greeted the first of the 129 Make-a-Wish families it has hosted in New York since then. That same year, MONY presented another excellence award, this time for providing flexible volunteer opportunities for people who work full-time.

In 2003 Big Apple Greeter was first evaluated by NYPAS (the New York Philanthropic Advisory Service, part of the Better Business Bureau) and, meeting all standards for charitable solicitation, was included in the New York State Giving Guide. The first annual report, assembled by long-time board member Don Eugene, was also produced that year.

On May 9, 2003, thanks to the dedication of board member Steve Schnall, a visitor request from Redmond, Washington was entered directly into the organization’s proprietary Connects computer system for the first time, eliminating the need for volunteers to laboriously enter by hand the thousands of pages of handwritten visitor requests received each year. An automated Greet validation feature was added in August 2004.

On November 26, 2005, fortunately the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend when the building was substantially empty, a devastating fire swept through most of the 20th floor in the north wing of One Centre Street where Big Apple Greeter had been located since 1993. While the Greeter offices were not actually consumed in the blaze, it was clear that the whole floor would now need renovation and that Big Apple Greeter would need to be relocated to make room.

In 2006 the Web site was substantially upgraded to take advantage of new technology and include a far more sophisticated range of information and functionality. On the new site, visitors could, for the first time, request a Greeter or make a donation; prospective volunteers could learn about the program and find out about opportunities best suited to them; and information on key features of the program like accessibility could be easily located. In addition, recent press and news were updated regularly and a growing series of neighborhood profiles and walks was posted to help accommodate city visitors (or residents, for that matter) who didn’t have the opportunity to go out with a “live” Greeter.

Some of the growing collection of neighborhood profiles to be found on the redesigned Web site.
The Internet, including social media, has become an increasing part of Big Apple’s communications effort during the past few years. Facebook and other social media are used both to enhance community among the Greeter corps and with the visitors they serve.

TECHNOLOGY

For a number of years after its founding, Big Apple Greeter relied on relatively simple off-the-shelf software to meet its technology needs—or, more frequently, simply did without. Board member Joel Epstein was an early advocate for technology and was able to provide some support and equipment through Chase Bank initially. Then, in 1995, custom technology came to the organization thanks to the persistence of Board member Bob Johnson and an early volunteer, Steve Schnall. Technology was, perhaps, the only area of Big Apple Greeter’s formation where Brooks was not the visionary.

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Web sites were just becoming the latest “must have” communications tool, and Johnson and Schnall recognized that, for a small organization with a limited budget and a worldwide audience, a presence on the Web made a lot of sense. Further, thanks to globalization technology available through Johnson’s then-firm, Bowne & Company, users could access information on the site in multiple languages, smartly acknowledging a truly worldwide audience.

While the small paid staff had access to computers and a volunteer data base by then, all visitor requests still continued to be received in the central office via phone, mail, or fax, as they had from the beginning. A paper form was then filled out for each request and these were kept in a loose leaf binder for reference by the office volunteers. To the best of Schnall’s memory, email became available around 1997 to staff members (the only ones with computers at that time) but Executive Director Alicia Pierro recalls that even when she arrived in 1998 technology consisted of a hodgepodge of random PCs and each visitor request still had to be entered onto a paper form.

As new and better computer equipment found its way into the organization in the late nineties, the ability to communicate via email with Greeters and other volunteers was enabled and provided a major step forward, though it meant many older Greeters needed to learn computer skills for the first time, since technology had not been a part of their lives previously.

In February 6, 2007, the current office space on the 23rd floor of One Centre Street opened for business after literally years of discussion, negotiation and planning. The spacious, airy quarters, featuring expansive city views framed by the Corinthian columns that McKim, Mead and White used to ornament the building’s crown, were a welcome change as the physical needs of the organization had long outgrown its previous space on the 20th floor. Alicia Pierro, now executive director, was assigned the task of coordinating the move to the new space which went seamlessly.

In 2008 the Greeter for a Day program was formally initiated with Robert Catell, chairman of U. S. National Grid, serving as the first celebrity Greeter. Sixteen other well known New Yorkers have shared the spotlight since then.

In 2009, the Giant Leap campaign for sustainability (discussed in more detail below) was proposed by founder Lynn Brooks and adopted by the Board.

By the close of 2010 the program had greeted 100,000 people. That year Lynn Brooks was also nominated for the Liberty Medal by the New York Post, an annual award made to “a compassionate, disciplined person whose activities during the past year most improved the quality of life in a borough or neighborhood.”

In March 2011 Christopher P. Boylan, former deputy executive director for corporate affairs and communications at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and now with the General Contractors Association of New York and Harris Rand Lusk, generously agreed to assume the Chairmanship of Big Apple Greeter’s Board of Directors for the second time in his decade and a half of service on the Board.
The current Connects software program was developed specifically for the organization by John Zimmerman, another generous and creative volunteer, and launched in 1999. This custom-built program increased productivity dramatically. It allowed volunteer coordinators to enter visitor request information into a searchable data base that could then be accessed by multiple individuals seeking to match Greeters with visitors at the same time, something the old loose leaf notebook had made virtually impossible. Connects also provided a searchable data base of expanded Greeter information including language fluency, neighborhood specialties and likely availabilities as well as contact information, significantly facilitating the Greeter-visitor match process.

Another benefit of the Connects technology was that it allowed Bill Niles, a regular volunteer starting in 2002 who had been involved in sophisticated market research throughout his career, to mine the data being collected in the system. Data from Connects, together with that from a new Post Visit Data Base that Niles engineered, could be used to conduct literally dozens of different analyses and reports that helped provide vital feedback on visitor traffic by month, their points of origin and their satisfaction with the program, along with the neighborhoods requested and visited and any Greeter feedback.

The Internet, including social media, has become an increasing part of Big Apple’s communications effort during the past few years. A digital version of the annual report and an electronic newsletter make it possible to share information with a far wider audience than previously, enhancing the relationship with friends and supporters around the world. Facebook and other social media are used both to enhance community among the Greeter corps and with the visitors they serve.

In 2009, the organization’s growing leverage of social media was dramatically demonstrated when loyal Big Apple Greeter volunteers and friends helped win a $10,000 prize from Liquidnet’s Local Impact Challenge, which provides grants to New York City area non-profits that are strengthening the local community, by executing a digital campaign that generated more postings to their site than any other organization.

With an eye to the future, a new generation of software has been in development for some time with the overall objective of enabling Big Apple Greeter to accommodate both more volunteer Greeters and additional visitors. This initiative, being conducted in partnership with New York University, will also provide remote access and an upgraded volunteer data base. It will hopefully be ready for testing and full scale implementation in 2013.

**TRANSITION**

On May 17, 2006, Alicia Pierro became executive director of Big Apple Greeter, taking over day-to-day responsibilities from founder Lynn Brooks. Pierro, having spent her career in nonprofit organizations, had been director of volunteers, then deputy director since she joined the organization in February 1998. She was unusually well grounded in all of the program’s core areas and believed passionately in both its mission and its founder. Perhaps as a result, the transition has been smooth and productive to an almost unprecedented degree, with founder and former chief Brooks remaining heavily involved but now reporting to Pierro as she works on a broad array of special projects that will help define the future of the organization.

**The Global Greeter Network**

Perhaps the most dynamic and expansive of Brooks’s special projects has been the development of the Global Greeter Network, a loose confederation of programs based on the Big Apple Greeter concept that has members across the globe. Brooks’s trip to Melbourne in 1996 had identified an interest well beyond New York in providing visitors with the opportunity to meet a local host one-on-one and to see a city through his or her eyes while establishing a uniquely positive relationship. This initiative has essentially built on that interest.

The first Greeter Program Roundtable was held in 2005 with five other programs sending representatives to join Big Apple Greeter. At this assembly, network members agreed to the few general guidelines that would help define their commonality – specifically that, 1) organizations must provide volunteer hosts for visitors at no charge; 2) groups cannot exceed six in number; and 3) visitors and Greeters must use public transportation wherever available and reasonable to do so. Other than that, member programs were encouraged to customize their organizations to suit local circumstances. The organizations would then share information, best practices and media opportunities throughout the year and at an annual meeting, to be held on a geographically rotating basis.

From the original six cities who participated in the 2005 gathering – New York, Chicago, Adelaide, Toronto, Houston and Fairbanks – the
Global Greeter Network has expanded today to include programs in 26 cities on five continents:

- **Africa**: Cote d’Ivoire
- **Australia**: Adelaide and Melbourne
- **Europe and The U.K.**: Athens, Belgrade, Bilbao, Bourgogne, Brighton, Brussels, Kent, Lyon, Marseille, Moscow, Mulhouse, Nantes, Paris, Paris Boulogne, Pas-de-Calais, Subotica, Tarn-Albi, and The Hague
- **North America**: Chicago, Houston, New York City and Toronto
- **South America**: Buenos Aires

**Greeter for a Day**

A second initiative with which Brooks has been closely associated since her transition began in 2008 when the first “celebrity Greeter” accompanied city visitors on a special tour. The Greeter for a Day program invites business, community, and government leaders to fill a Greeter’s shoes for a few hours and share his or her enthusiasm for New York City and its neighborhoods with appreciative visitors. Since the first in the series by Robert Catell, chairman of U.S. National Grid, an impressive list of well-known city citizens has participated including city council members and other high ranking city officials, members of the press, business leaders, performers and artists. In addition to the positive press generated for New York City, the initiative has also demonstrated that, in at least one respect, high profile New Yorkers are no different than anybody else: they appreciate a chance to express their admiration for their city in a unique and very personal way.

**Giant Leap and the Future**

Big Apple Greeter has grown exponentially and enjoyed significant success over twenty years, becoming a much beloved institution in the city and around the world. It has never, however, been able to establish a significant endowment or even identify a consistent, dependable annual revenue stream. Therefore, the third major project that has understandably occupied Brooks’s attention since stepping down as executive director is her effort to assure funding sufficient to maintain the program in the years ahead. Needless to say, for this effort, Brooks teams with Pierro, and the other paid staffers and Board members.

As has been true since its founding, a largely volunteer work force and generous in-kind funding keep the actual cash cost of operating the program to a minimum, but even this small amount has been difficult to raise during the recent economic downturn, meaning the tiny paid staff must work harder than ever to attract funding, grants and donations that are too often smaller than they were five years ago.

In response, several years ago Brooks launched a new initiative designed to bring the compelling story of Big Apple Greeter to a larger audience with the objective of enabling a “giant leap” as she saw it towards establishing sustainable funding. While times are far from propitious for such an effort, Brooks has a good story to tell and has lost none of the tenacity and persuasiveness that enabled her to carry out her vision originally.

Positive early signs of her “leap” include an unusually generous grant from The Fuserna Foundation, founded by noted philanthropist Ariadne Getty in 2010. The foundation partners with a select number of charitable organizations, seeking to revive organizations that are struggling due to financial constraints.
CONCLUSION

As Board Chair Chris Boylan recently commented, “Big Apple Greeter is truly a magical organization that sprung from a seed in Lynn Brooks’s mind twenty years ago. It would have been difficult to imagine at that time that it would grow into an organization with the international scope and reach that Big Apple Greeter has today. The work of a few hundred volunteers and the tens of thousands of visitors with which they have shared their native or adopted City, has blossomed into many millions of positive impressions of New York from both the press and perhaps more importantly, by word of mouth.”

However, the reason the concept has proved so enduring and successful may not be so hard to understand after all. Then as now, Brooks maintained an expansive, even aspirational view of her fellow human beings. She believes that most people are altruistic when given an opportunity, willing and even eager to support the things they love like their city, that circumstances can and will be made better by people who care, and above all, that individuals from widely different cultures can connect if you put them face-to-face in the right context. Big Apple Greeter was predicated on all of these beliefs and demonstrates them to be true every single day, with a new generation carrying Brooks’s vision forward.

But perhaps the most compelling illustration of Big Apple Greeter’s capacity for generating human connection is best presented in one last reminiscence. On September 11, 2001, not quite ten years after the organization was founded, New York City experienced one of the lowest points in its four hundred year history. The Big Apple Greeter office at One Centre Street received faxes and e-mails from a host of past visitors all over the world expressing both concern for the safety of their Greeter friends and condolences for all that the city was currently enduring. For these good souls at least, Big Apple Greeter was the very heart of the city.

APPENDIX 1

BOARD MEMBERS THROUGHOUT BIG APPLE GREETER HISTORY (YEARS SERVED ON BOARD)

Barbara Bailey, Assistant Director of Communications, Workers of America Local 1180’s Retiree Division (Retired) (2000 – present)
Elisabeth A. Balts, Global Business Development & Management (1993 – present)
Kamal Bhatia, CFA, Senior VP, Fixed Income and Alternatives, Oppenheimer Funds (2008 – present)
Garrett R. Bowden, Managing Partners, TAG Real Estate Partners, LLC (1999 – present)
Christopher P. Boylan, Director, Governmental & Strategic Partnerships, General Contractors Association; Director, National Transportation & Infrastructure Practice, Harris Rand Lusk (1997 – present)
Lynn Brooks, Big Apple Greeter (1993 – present)
Tuesday Brooks, President, AJOY Management Enterprise (1997 – 2004)
Tony Carvette, President, Structure Tone (1995 – 1999)
Patty Clark, Sr. Advisor to the Aviation Director for External Affairs, The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (2006 – present)
Brian Cooper, Partner, KPMG (1999 – 2001)
Joe Costabile, Executive Director Strategic Agency Services, Cushman & Wakefield (1994 – 1996)
Robert F. Crook, Director of Compliance, Loews Corporation (2003 – 2005)
Elliott Cuker, President, Cooper Classics, Ltd. (2000)
Kelly Ann Curtin, Senior Vice President, Membership, NYC & Company (2008 – present)
Matthew Daus, Esq., Commissioner, NYC Civil Service Commission; Distinguished Lecturer, CUNY, Partner, Windels Marx Lane & Mittendorf, LLP (2006 – present)
Anne M. Davis Esq., NYC Chapter National MS Society (1993 – 2008)
Merrie L. Davis, President & Publisher, MVP/NY (1995 – present)
Susan Dessel, Director, Community Relations for New York City, AT&T (1993 – 1995)
Douglas Durst, President, The Durst Organization (1996 – present)
Gretchen Dykstra, President, Times Square BID (1993 – 1996)
Joel L. Epstein, Chairman & CEO, AIG Consumer Finance (Retired) (1993 – present)
Don Eugene, Senior Officer, R.H. Macy & Co., Inc. (Retired); Callydus Group LLC (2002 – present)
Robert Felsenthal, Associate Publisher, Crain’s New York Business (1998 – 2001)
Adam Friedman, Executive Director, Industrial Retention Network (1993 – 1998)
Carl Gambino, Group Director, S.V.P., Signature Bank (2005 – 2009)
Joel Gensler, Partner, Eisner LLP (2006 – 2009)
Jill Groce, General Manager, JC Penny Manhattan Mall (2009 – 2011)

Brooks believes that most people are altruistic... that circumstances can and will be made better... and that individuals from widely different cultures can connect...
Paul Harrett, VP & General Manager, Columbus Center LLC (1997 – 2005)
Nurite Kahane Hasse, President, JourneyCorp (1994 – 1996)
Scott Herman, VP & General Manager, WINS Radio (1996 – 2003)
Paul Insalaco, President, BF9 Media (1995– present)
Virginia Kee, Chair, Chinese American Planning Council (1993 – 1997)
Peter Kohlmann, Founder, PeKo Creative (2006 – present)
Jeffery Lam, Managing Member, Lam Generation, LLC (2007 – 2011)
John Lam, Executive Vice President, HSBC Bank USA (1999 – 2000)
George Lence, President, Nicholas & Lence Communications, LLC (2011 – present)
Thomas G. Lewis, President, Gray Line New York Sightseeing (2002 – present)
Andy Lun, President & Creative Director, TOTO Images, Inc. (1997 – 1999)
Dr. Deborah MacFarlane, Vice President, Institutional Development, Thirteen/WNET New York (2005 – 2008)
Mary McCartney, Director, Corporate Communications, Con Edison (1999 – 2002)
Louise Morrow, Executive Director, Lockheed Martin Leadership Institute (2000 – present)
Cristyne Nicholas, CEO, Nicholas & Lence Communications, LLC (1999 – 2011)
Michael Nissan, Chairman & CEO, Convergence Advisors LLC (1993 – 2002)
Laurie Noms, Intercultural Communications and Editorial Services Consultant (2005 – 2009)
Laura Osman, Senior Managing Director, Concord International Investments (2008 – 2009)
Alicia Pierro, Big Apple Greeter (2005 – present)
 Colleen Roche (2000 – 2001)
 David Rothenfeld, Esq., Partner, Kane Kessler, P.C. (2004 – present)
 John J. Ruzich, OBE, President & CEO, The TIMM Group, LLC (2002 – present)
 Sergio A. Sanchez, Executive Vice President, LBOA/Partners (2010 – 2011)
 Joseph M. Scharfenberger, Executive Assistant to Vice President, MetLife (Retired) Greeters Representative (2005 – present)
 Janet Unger, Director International Marketing, Bloomingdale’s (1993 – 1996)
 Horace Webb, Senior Vice President Public Affairs, Con Edison (Retired) (1996 – present)
 Lloyd Williams, President & CEO, Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce (1993 – 2001)
 Markly Wilson, Director, International Marketing, New York State Division of Tourism (2003 – present)
 Stephen Schnall, Partner, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC Consulting) (2003 – present)
 Rita Schwartz, Director of Government Relations, General Contractors Association of New York (1997)
 Kenneth Smith, CPA, Partner, EisnerAmper LLP (2009 – present)
 Steven Smith, District Director Sales, NYC, Delta Airlines, Inc. (1995 – 1998)
 Joseph E. Spinnato, President, Hotel Association of New York City, Inc. (1995 – present)
 Paul Stevens, Senior Sales Director, Continental Airlines, Inc. (2002 – 2004)
 Steve Swenson VP & General Manager, 1010 WINS & WCBS Newsradio 880 (2009 – 2011)
 Diana L. Taylor, Managing Director, Wolfensohn & Co. (1999 – 2009)
 Barbara M. Tomanelli, Executive Assistant to Vice President, MetLife (Retired) Greeters Representative (2005 – present)
 Janet Unger, Director International Marketing, Bloomingdale’s (1993 – 1996)
 Horace Webb, Senior Vice President Public Affairs, Con Edison (Retired) (1996 – present)
 Lloyd Williams, President & CEO, Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce (1993 – 2001)
 Markly Wilson, Director, International Marketing, New York State Division of Tourism (2003 – present)
CELEBRATE NEW YORK
Past Fall Benefit Honorees & Benefit Chairs

2011  Robert K. Steel – Deputy Mayor of Economic Development, Honoree
      Christopher O. Ward – Former Executive Director, The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, Honoree
      Statue Cruises, Honoree
      Fusenma Foundation, Benefit Chair

2010  Ariadne Getty – Founder, The Fusenma Foundation, Honoree
      Lynn Brooks – Founder, Big Apple Greeter, Honoree

2009  Christine Quinn - Speaker, New York City Council, Honoree
      Daniel A. Biederman - President, 34th Street Partnership and Bryant Park Corporation, Honoree
      Dominic Chianese - Actor & Singer, Honoree
      Peter M. Meyer - President, NYC Market, TD Bank, Benefit Chair
      Hon. Marty Markowitz – Brooklyn Borough President, Honorary Benefit Chair

2008  John Catsimatidis – Chairman & CEO, Red Apple Group, Honoree
      Charlotte St. Martin – Executive Director, The Broadway League, Honoree
      Dennis Swanson – President, Fox Television Stations, Honoree

2007  Amanda M. Burden – Dir, NYC Dept. of City Planning, Chair, City Planning Comm., Honoree
      Tim Zagat – Co-Founder, Co-Chair & CEO, Zagat Survey, Benefit Co-Chair
      Joseph E. Spinnato - President, Hotel Association of New York, Inc., Benefit Chair

2006  Andrew R. Mann – Principal, Gardiner & Theobald, Inc., Honoree
      Anthony Carvette - President, Structure Tone, Inc., Benefit Chair

2005  Katherine Olvier – Comm., NYC Mayor’s Office of Film, Theatre & Broadcasting, Honoree
      Tom Kane, President and CEO, Viacom Television Stations Group, Benefit Chair

2004  Robert F. Fox, Jr. – Partner, Cook + Fox Architects, Honoree
      Douglas Durst – President, Durst Organization, Benefit Chair

2003  Joseph J. Seymour - Executive Director, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Honoree
      Larry Silverstein – President, Silverstein Properties, Benefit Co-Chair
      Diana Taylor - Superintendent of Banks, New York State Banking Department, Benefit Co-Chair

2002  John M. Vazquez - Sr. V. P. & Dr. Global Facilities Services, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., Honoree
      Charles J. Mailish - Executive Vice President, J.P. Morgan Chase, Honoree
      Peter Striano – CEO, Unity Electric, Benefit Chair

2000  Brendan Sexton – President, Brendan Sexton & Associates, Honoree
      Lynn White - Host, WPIX TV Channel 11, Honoree
      Scott Herman - V.P. & General Manager, 1010 WINS, Honoree
      Lloyd Williams - President and CEO, Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, Honoree

1999  Scott Newman – V.P. & General Manager, 1010 WINS, Honoree
      Richard D. Parsons - President, Time Warner, Inc., Honoree
      Michael J. Stengel - Market Vice President & Area General Manager, NYC Marriott Hotels, Benefit Chair

      Eugene R. McGrath - Chairman & CEO, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., Benefit Chair

1997  Richard D. Parsons - President, Time Warner, Inc., Honoree
      Robert R. Kiley - The New York City Partnership, Benefit Chair

1996  Douglas Durst – President, The Durst Organization, Honoree
      Thomas G. Labrecque - Chief Executive Officer, The Chase Manhattan Bank, Benefit Chair

1995  William Chaney – Chairman & CEO, Tiffany & Co., Honoree
      Anthony M. Carvette - President, Structure Tone, Co-Chair
      Joseph G. Costabile – Sr. Director, Cushman & Wakefield, Inc., Co-Chair

ANNIVERSARY RECOGNITION BREAKFAST
Past Spring Benefit Honorees & Benefit Chairs

2011  Rachelle Friedman – President & Co-CEO, J&R, Honoree
      Helena Durst – Co-Vice President, The Durst Organization, Co-Chair
      Ariadne Getty – Founder, Fusenma Foundation, Co-Chair

      Paul P. Mak – President & CEO, Brooklyn Chinese-American Association
      Joseph Briller – Greeter of the Year

2009  Tili Barber – Retired NFL Pro-Bowl Running Back, NBC News Correspondent, “Football Night in America” Analyst, Chairman of Tiki Ventures, LLC, Honoree
      Robert C. Liabar – Deputy Mayor of Economic Development, Honoree

2008  William R. DeCota – Aviation Director, The Port Authority of NY & NJ, Honoree
      Larry Kellner – Chairman & CEO, Continental Airlines, Benefit Chair

2007  Tim Tompkins – President, Times Square Alliance, Honoree
      Michael J. Stengel – Market Vice President & Area General Manager, NYC Marriott Hotels, Benefit Chair

2006  Hon. Adolfo Carrion, Jr. – Bronx Borough President, Hon. Marty Markowitz – Brooklyn Borough President, Honored Guests

2005  Carl Weisbrod – President, The Downtown Alliance, Honoree
      Bruce Ratner - President & CEO, Forest City Ratner Companies and
      Thomas Renyi - Chairman and CEO, The Bank of New York Company, Inc., Benefit Co-Chairs

2004  Stephen M. Ross - Founder & CEO of The Related Companies, L.P., Honoree
      Steve Spinola - President, Real Estate Board of New York, Benefit Chair

2003  Crystyna L. Nicholas - President & CEO, NYC & Company, Honoree
      Joseph E. Spinnato - President, Hotel Association of New York City, Inc., Benefit Chair

2001  Charles A. Gargano – Chairman & Commissioner; Empire State Development Corporation, Honoree
      Elizabeth A. Balz - Senior Vice President, MasterCard International, Benefit Chair

1999  Lewis Rudin – Co-Chair, Rudin Management, Honoree

      Richard F. Syron - Chairman, The American Stock Exchange, Benefit Chair

1997  Richard D. Parsons - President, Time Warner, Inc., Honoree
      Robert R. Kiley - The New York City Partnership, Benefit Chair

1996  Douglas Durst – President, The Durst Organization, Honoree
      Thomas G. Labrecque - Chief Executive Officer, The Chase Manhattan Bank, Benefit Chair

1995  William Chaney – Chairman & CEO, Tiffany & Co., Honoree
      Anthony M. Carvette - President, Structure Tone, Co-Chair
      Joseph G. Costabile – Sr. Director, Cushman & Wakefield, Inc., Co-Chair

      Thomas G. Labrecque - Chairman, The Chase Manhattan Bank, Benefit Chair