

# W75BA NEWS

WEST 75TH STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION ■ CENTRAL PARK WEST TO RIVERSIDE DRIVE

## We Say a Sad Good-bye to Joan Franklin

*Her friends and neighbors deeply mourn the death of Joan Franklin, president of the West 75th Street Block Association, on August 11.*



PHOTO: JOHN ROCKWELL, CINEMA SOUND LTD.

*Joan Franklin, left, with NYC council member Gale Brewer, at one of the many street soirees Joan organized during her years as president of the West 75th Street Block Association.*

**J**OAN FRANKLIN, a homeowner on West 75th Street for more than four decades, was president of the West 75th Street block association for years. She loved her neighborhood; with endless energy—and droll good humor—she worked to make it better. Flourishing tree bed gardens with brick borders, and the freshly painted post office boxes, free of graffiti, are reminders of how much Joan inspired and encouraged us to join her in making our street a beautiful place to live. She did more, organizing street soirees and holiday parties enlivened by local entertainers—convivial occasions where we got to know each other.

Joan also planned association meetings with leaders from city and state government, and the agencies, organizations, and neighborhood shopkeeper that affect our everyday lives. We met Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, NY State Senator Thomas Duane, and State Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal. Council Member Gale Brewer was a regular at W75BA events. We heard from our 20th Precinct crime prevention officer, the MTA, local firemen, and representatives of Landmark West! and Riverside Park. We had our household treasures valued by a neighborhood antique dealer, and most recently, Bobby Corrigan, New York City's consultant on rodents, advised us on how to control the rats infesting our street. Joan started a block association newsletter that kept us

up to date on what was happening on the block and nearby—and gave public recognition to the individual efforts of our neighbors.

Ben Gumms, a homeowner on the 200 block, had revived our block association several years ago. Joan worked closely with him and took on the presidency when Ben moved to North Dakota. Ben wrote us: "She was my last and most reliable link to West 75th Street. I was so comfortable with her taking over West 75th Street Block Association. And she was doing so much for the street. It will miss her as will I."

What newcomers may not know: Joan's neighborhood commitment goes back to the 1960s, when people were uneasy on what was then a crime-ridden Upper West Side. Joan was an active participant from the evening that she opened her home for the formative meeting of our first block association—the one that raised money with bake sales on Broadway and door-to-door canvassing

to pay for and install sodium street lamps to make the street safer. Everyone on the street knew each other then, adding to our safety.

After installing the street lamps, still in place, we went on to raise money to plant trees. Summers, we closed the 300 block for street volley ball games that drew people from neighboring blocks, and for pot luck suppers—Joan always brought a roast turkey to the table.

Born in Maine, Joan attended the Waynflete School in Portland and in 1950 graduated from Wellesley College. In 1962 Joan and her husband Bob established Cinema Sound, Ltd., an audio recording studio, at #311. The news and educational features they produced were syndicated to radio stations nationwide and included Night Talk, broadcast Sunday nights on WOR in New York, and programs for the American Museum of Natural History, the Carnegie Corporation and Rodale Press. When Bob died in 1980, Joan continued to run the company, producing educational and instructional audio.

No one can replace Joan in our hearts. She enriched our lives and our neighborhood. A fitting memorial, we think, will be to continue the W75BA and to raise funds for permanent iron tree bed guards where needed. (Contact [gamut@mratcliffe.com](mailto:gamut@mratcliffe.com) to help.)

Watch for an announcement of a memorial service.

—Mary Ratcliffe