

# Patricia Walkup Memorial

By Frances Neagley

As someone said, Patricia must have organized a petition drive in heaven for the sun to come out, because after a dreary Saturday, the memorial for Patricia was held in perfect weather on Sunday, September 10th. Coincidentally, this was a year and a day after the opening ceremony for Octavia Boulevard, and many of the dignitaries that were present for the opening were present to celebrate Patricia's life and the accomplishments in which she played such a major role. The memorial was held in the park at the end of Octavia Boulevard, which was dedicated "Patricia's Green in Hayes Valley" after the memorial concluded. The park looked great for the event, through the efforts of park stewards, a cleanup organized by Barbara Wenger and Hayes Valley Neighborhood Parks Group, and special attention from SF Recreation and Parks Department. The setting and the ceremony would not have been nearly as nice without the expertise of Rec and Park's Rose Dennis, who worked on details large and small to support the event.



Dignitaries unveil the new signage for Patricia's Green in Hayes Valley

The event started with some beautiful songs performed by Kathleen Hollingsworth and then a ceremonial procession led by the San Francisco Zen Center. It was simple, inclusive, and very fitting for Patricia and the neighborhood. Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association President Paul Olsen served as emcee, introducing speakers who were friends of Patricia, each with a different set of memories, all with the same view of a remarkable woman who touched many in her life. Speakers included

Supervisor Tom Ammiano, Transportation Authority Director Jose Luis Moscovich, Patricia's brother Lee Walkup, Kathy and Leroy Looper of the Cadillac Hotel, and Robin Levitt, longtime neighborhood activist and close friend of Patricia. Each shared memories of Patricia that struck a chord with the crowd, whether it was regarding Patricia's virtuosity on the phone or willingness to help with any socially responsible cause.

Some of the dignitaries present were acknowledged from the podium, but as Olsen said, there were so many civic leaders present that to acknowledge them all would double the length of the ceremony! Former Mayor Art Agnos was among those attending, along with D6 Supervisor Chris Daly, BART Director Tom Radulovich, John Thomas from DPW who designed the park landscaping and Dave Monks from Los Angeles who had been a great help during the freeway wars. Also in attendance was Captain Keith Sanford of SFPD, who Olsen introduced as Lt. Sanford. When discussing that later, Olsen explained that many long-time residents of the neighborhood referred to Sanford as "our Lieutenant" because he was such an active participant in community efforts when he worked out of Northern Station (Sanford is now Captain of Taravel Station).

Patricia's Green in Hayes Valley was also dedicated as part of the event. Assemblyman Mark Leno led off the dedication by talking about Patricia as a singular woman, but also as a strong representative of an active community. Patricia had many accomplishments, but they were tied to the work she did with so many, being a strong proponent of collaboration. Then-Supervisor Leno had been very helpful in the freeway campaigns, even though this wasn't his district and there initially wasn't support in his district. But once he sat down with Patricia and others from the neighborhood, he was convinced that replacing the freeway with a boulevard was the right thing to do. He became part of the collaborative effort all across San Francisco that worked to replace an unsafe freeway with a much more pleasant way to move traffic. As he said, there was no arguing with Patricia.

Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, whose district (D5) includes the Green, was the other speaker at the dedication. The Supervisor had flown in from the East Coast just hours before, for a ceremony he said he just couldn't miss. Ross spoke of Patricia's passion and far-reaching vision, and her breadth of knowledge about myriad parts of Hayes Valley and the City as a whole. He pointed out that she could have an idea that might seem far-fetched when she spoke of it, but very astute when one had a chance to look back at a later time. Noting Patricia wasn't one to accept the status quo, Supervisor Mirkarimi challenged the community to live up to her example.



Kathy and Leroy Looper of the Cadillac Hotel speak of Patricia's humanitarian efforts

After their remarks, Assemblyman Leno and Supervisor Mirkarimi were joined by Supervisor Ammiano, former Mayor Agnos, TA Director Moscovich, and Captain Sanford in unveiling the official park sign. Then the crowd was treated to music by Mariachi Tequilla and refreshments from neighborhood restaurants including Modern Tea, Frjtz, Arlequin and Café Grillades.

Olsen noted at one point during the ceremony that Patricia leaves behind a strong legacy. Part of that might be the physical, but the legacy of which she would be most proud is in the people she left behind. As a mentor, Patricia helped shape many lives, and she lives on in the work that those people do.

Contributions are being accepted to permanently place in the Green a memorial to Patricia and the community effort it took to remove the Central Freeway. For more information contact Robin Levitt at 863-5302 or [rflvitt@prodigy.net](mailto:rflvitt@prodigy.net)