



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Delaware Park's Historic Grand Staircase Restored

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy unveiled the newly restored Grand Staircase, one of the most significant original features of Frederick Law Olmsted's park and parkway system in Buffalo

Buffalo, N.Y. – Today, the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, along with partners, unveiled the newly restored Grand Staircase in Delaware Park, bringing one of the most historically significant features of Frederick Law Olmsted's park and parkway system back to its original prominence. Serving as a vital connection point between Lincoln Parkway and Delaware Park's Hoyt Lake, the Grand Staircase exemplifies Mr. Olmsted's revolutionary connective design for Buffalo's park and parkway system, while also providing a beautiful viewshed of Hoyt Lake from the Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

"We are grateful and excited to officially announce that the restoration of the Grand Staircase in Delaware Park is now complete," said Beth Downing, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy Interim Executive Director. "Thank you to the generous support of the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, The Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, and every private donor for making this project possible. We hope every park user enjoys this beautifully restored space."

In collaboration with famed Buffalo architect E.B. Green, the Olmsted Firm designed the steps as a connection from Delaware Park to the future landscape plan for Green's Albright Art Gallery. Although the art gallery building wasn't completed until 1906, the stairway visually connected other impressive Pan-Am features, including The Buffalo History Museum (then the New York State Building), the Bridge of the Three Americas, and a boathouse (now Marcy Casino), all integral public components found on the lake side of Delaware Park.

Over the last several decades, the massive granite stones of the Grand Staircase shifted as large sections of the foundation beneath them eroded away. Periodic repairs kept the steps in relatively fair working order. However, over the last ten years, the Grand Staircase reached a point of critical need.

The restoration of the Grand Staircase included the following elements:

- Disassembly of original granite stones to inspect the foundation
- Reconstruction of the foundation and substructure of the steps
- Restoration and cleaning of original granite stones for reuse, while sourcing suitable restoration grade stones for those sections that were beyond repair
- Reassembly of the stonework with professional masonry and repointing

For more information, please visit <https://bfloparks.org/grandstaircase>

Quotes

Sean M. Ryan, New York State Senator, District 61: “Buffalo is fortunate to have park stewards like the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy to see through capital projects such as the Grand Staircase restoration while maintaining and enhancing accessible green spaces for our community. I look forward to continue working alongside the Conservancy’s team to help ensure our historic parks thrive for generations to come.”

Assemblymember Jon D. Rivera: “Frederick Law Olmsted's vision of Buffalo was to be a city in park, and the restoration of the grand staircase connecting Hoyt Lake and Delaware Park with the Elmwood Avenue corridor moves Western New York closer to the achievement of that ideal. I applaud the Olmsted Conservancy for their stewardship of parks in the 149th District and am proud to support their efforts to make the park system accessible to us all.”

Lisa Chimera, Niagara River Greenway Commission member and current Erie County Deputy County Executive: “I have had the honor of representing Delaware Park as a County Legislator, Deputy County Executive, and as a member of the Niagara River Greenway Commission. As a member of the Greenway Commission, it’s projects like the Grand Staircase restoration that serve as critical elements connecting people to the precious Niagara River Greenway, which is at the core of what the Commission stands for.”

Joel P. Feroletto, City of Buffalo Common Council Member for the Delaware District: “The Grand Staircase is one of the most visible entrances to the Olmsted Park System, and adjacent to the recently opened Buffalo AKG Art Museum. I am thrilled to see this restoration project completed, and hope that this would enhance the overall park experience for Buffalonians and visitors from across the region.”

Daniel Castle, Chair of The Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee and Commissioner of Erie County Environment & Planning: “The Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee (Committee) is proud to be able to support the restoration of this grand park feature in Delaware Park. With \$220,000 invested through the Committee from New York Power Authority relicensing settlement funding, into one of the Olmsted Park System’s oldest structure, we are able to preserve its historic significance while enhancing safety and access for park users throughout the region.”

JJ Tighe, Director, Parks and Trails Initiative, Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation: “It is a wonderful accomplishment to see the Grand Staircase at Delaware Park restored. We are excited to see the partnership between the City of Buffalo and Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy continue to grow and make these improvements possible. All across the City of Buffalo, these park spaces bring communities together, and partnerships like these ensure parks are able to welcome and benefit all.”

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About the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy is the first nonprofit organization in the nation, through a unique public-private partnership, to manage, operate and maintain an entire urban park system consisting of more than 850 acres of beautifully designed historic parks, parkways and circles. The Conservancy is an independent not-for-profit, community organization whose mission is to steward Buffalo's historic Olmsted park system to welcome and benefit all. To accomplish this, the Conservancy collaborates with community and strategic partners, advocates for quality parks for all, and enhances the park system through beautification, maintenance, and capital projects. More than 2.5 million visits occur in Buffalo's Olmsted Park system annually for recreation, relaxation, and rejuvenation.

The Buffalo Olmsted Park System includes: Six parks: Cazenovia, Delaware, Front, Martin Luther King, Jr., Riverside, and South Seven parkways: Bidwell, Chapin, Lincoln, McKinley, Porter, Red Jacket, and Richmond Eight landscaped traffic circles: Agassiz, Colonial, Ferry, Gates, McClellan, McKinley, Soldiers, and Symphony Smaller spaces: Days, Heacock and Prospect



Photos

Photo from left to right: Jonathan Rivera, New York State Assembly Member 149th District | Janne Sirén, PhD, Peggy Pierce Elfvig Director, Buffalo AKG | Lisa Chimera, Erie County Deputy County Executive and Niagara River Greenway Commission member | Sean M. Ryan, New York State Senator, District 61 | Joel P. Feroletto, City of Buffalo Common Council Member, Delaware District | Daniel Castle, Chair, The Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee | Kevin Kelly, BOPC Trustee | Carol Sampson, Community Relations Representative, New York Power Authority | Ba Zan Lin, Community Impact Associate Vice President, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo | Beth Downing, BOPC Interim Executive Director | Dr. Norman Lewin, BOPC Trustee



Photo courtesy of City of Buffalo

