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Preservation Network Celebrates Greenwich's Fourth Ward Historic District with Historic Marker

Cos Cob, CT, February 8, 2017--On Friday, February 3, two dozen people gathered in Greenwich's National Register-designated Fourth Ward to dedicate the Greenwich Preservation Network's newest historic marker. The permanent marker, located near the William Street Playground, outlines the history of the area for all passers-by. Greenwich Historical Society Chairman Davide Strackbein welcomed the group and acknowledged the efforts of Charles Hilton Architects, Cornerstone Contracting and the Town of Greenwich for the marker's design, construction and installation. Greenwich Hospital generously underwrote the project, and its president, Norman G. Roth, was on hand to address the group about the marker's significance.

"Greenwich Hospital is proud to be a part of the history of this extraordinary town," said Norman G. Roth, president Greenwich Hospital. "We have been a part of this community since opening our doors in 1906. While we have grown tremendously since then, we have never forgotten how important it is to honor our roots and that's why this marker has so much meaning."

Debra Mecky, Executive Director of the Greenwich Historical Society, described the unique history of the area, which was established around 1836 and is one of only two centrally located urban subdivisions in town to pre-date the coming of the railroad in 1848. In contrast to the summer homes of wealthy New Yorkers on the Post Road, the concentration of predominantly Irish families who settled there earned it the nickname "Fourth Ward" after the working-class immigrant neighborhood in lower Manhattan. In 1860 immigrants built the town's first Roman Catholic church, St. Mary Church, on William Street (demolished c.1910). By 1900 over 20 multi-family dwellings solidified the area's working-class image. Ten percent of the neighborhood was home to African-Americans, who worked primarily as laborers, laundresses or chauffeurs. First Baptist Church,

which had been organized in 1897, bought a house on Northfield Street in 1904 and greatly enlarged it into the present-day edifice in 1910. This is one of only two African-American churches in Greenwich that still stands today. Neighborhood development stalled from 1929 until the mid 1950s, when the first commercial buildings were erected.

The Fourth Ward is now characterized by a mix of residential and light commercial use, with Greenwich Hospital playing a central role in its continuing vitality. The hospital won a Greenwich Historical Society Preservation Award in 2010 for the restoration of #28 William Street, now a private home. Greenwich Hospital faithfully restored this home to its original 1898 appearance, using salvaged materials from the demolition of its twin at #26.

The Greenwich Preservation Network was founded under the auspices of the Greenwich Historical Society with a mission to educate and provide information to Greenwich residents regarding the value and need to preserve significant architectural and historic structures and streetscapes.

Anyone interested in sponsoring a future marker may contact the Greenwich Historical Society at 203-869-6899.



Left to right: Beverly Burke Siemon; Jack Morris (with hat); Dean Gamanos, Greenwich Preservation Network (red jacket); Fifi Sheridan, Greenwich Preservation Network (with hat); Selectman John Toner (white hair in back); Debra Mecky, Greenwich Historical Society; Diane Fox, Greenwich Preservation Network (red jacket); Davidde Strackbein, Greenwich Historical Society (black coat in front); Annie and Tim Brown, Fourth Ward residents; Norman G. Roth, Greenwich Hospital; Chuck Hilton, Charles Hilton Architects; George Pusser, Cornerstone Contracting; JoAnn Messina, Greenwich Preservation Network

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