

THE HISTORY OF THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

Thirty-five years ago, Three Parks Independent Democrats came to life in the home of Milivoy and Christine Samurovich. Milivoy, who had been the Treasurer of our predecessor, Riverside Democratic Club, was elected District Leader of Three Parks. Current Three Parks Board Member Corine Pettey had been a Riverside District Leader. Other founding members included Ralph Andrew, Werner Freitag, Jane Solomon, and Shirley Wasserman. Since then, the club has grown to almost 400 tireless advocates for progressive Democratic causes on the Upper West Side, and indeed, around the country.

In the 1970s, the nascent club supported Franz Leichter and H. Carl McCall for State Senate, Ted Weiss for Congress, Henry Stern and Bobby Wagner for City Council Members-at-Large, and Ruth Messinger and Christine Samurovich for school board. Ralph Andrew became Chief of Staff to Congressman Weiss. For the 1976 presidential race, we supported, in rapid succession, Sen. Fred Harris, Sen. Birch Bayh, Sen. Mo Udall, and finally, Gov. Jimmy Carter's campaign and victory. Ed Wallace became club president, succeeded Tony Olivieri as Manhattan Council Member-at-Large, and later joined City Council President Carol Bellamy as Chief of Staff.

Our first campaign storefront with Broadway Democrats, supporting Mondale-Ferraro, opened in 1984 on Broadway near 105th Street. In the following years, Three Parks successfully campaigned for Council Member Carolyn Maloney and David Dinkins for Borough President. We opened the second presidential storefront with Broadway Dems in 1988 for the Dukakis-Bentsen ticket, where club President Lynn Thomas began our tradition of fabulously successful button selling.

In 1989, by a handful of votes, Phil Reed defeated Steve Strauss to become District Leader. Throughout the primary and general election campaigns that year, Phil, Ralph Andrew and Jesse Crawford led the club in supporting David Dinkins for Mayor. Lynn Thomas was elected to the State Committee for the 69th A.D. Organized by Bob Botfeld and Cynthia Doty, Three Parkers joined with other West Side community groups to prevent a rezoning of the neighborhood that would have permitted 22-story apartment buildings and eliminated the Douglass Houses grounds and green areas.

The 1990s began with club members' active involvement in public hearings on redrawing the district lines for the newly enlarged City Council. Although we saved ourselves from being cut up into three districts, the club was still divided between two districts represented by C. Virginia Fields and Adam C. Powell, IV. In 1991, Phil Reed first ran for City Council with the full support of Three Parks, narrowly missing a court-ordered runoff between Adam Powell and Bill Del Toro. The club's third storefront with Broadway Dems opened in 1992 to support Clinton-Gore; Steve Strauss had successfully urged Three Parks to commit early to Clinton. With redrawn congressional districts, Three Parks also supported Carolyn Maloney in her first congressional victory over incumbent Republican Bill Green; Steve coordinated Carolyn's West Side field operation.

That year the club was deeply divided in the Senate primary among Ferraro, Abrams, Holtzman, and Sharpton. Just two days before the primary, our beloved Ted Weiss died. Three Parks then became embroiled in the hotly contested County Committee nomination of his successor. Most of our delegates backed Franz Leichter; Assembly Member Jerry Nadler was the victor. In 1993, the club opened another storefront, West Siders for a Democratic Victory, to campaign for, among others, Hevesi, Green, and the reelection of

David Dinkins. Club member Douglas Kellner became Manhattan Commissioner, Board of Elections; in 2005, he became Co-chair of the State Board of Elections.

With the help of Three Parks, all three of our House members were victorious in 1994. Charlie Rangel and Jerry Nadler had primaries; Carolyn Maloney crushed Charles Millard with over 60 percent of the vote. We campaigned successfully for H. Carl McCall for Comptroller. Judy Wood was elected District Leader to succeed Cynthia Doty, who had resigned to work for Assembly Member Ed Sullivan. In March 1996, Phil Reed resigned as District Leader; the County Committee elected Bob Botfeld to replace him. Longtime board member Jesse Crawford passed away. The second Clinton-Gore Three Parks/Broadway storefront was at Broadway and 100th Street. The following year, Phil Reed won in the 8th Council District and Bill Perkins in the 9th. Despite Three Parks's best efforts, Giuliani was reelected over our endorsed favorite, Borough President Ruth Messinger. Club-supported C. Virginia Fields was elected Manhattan Borough President. After 30 years, Franz Leichter retired in 1998; we endorsed Eric Schneiderman to fill his State Senate seat. Three Parks also helped replace Al D'Amato with Congressman Charles Schumer as United States Senator.

The 2000 presidential storefront with Broadway Dems at Broadway and 105th Street got out the vote for the Gore-Lieberman campaign and helped elect Senator Hillary Clinton. The tragedy of September 11th occurred on primary day nearly a year later; after a postponement, Three Parks candidate Mark Green won the mayoral primary, but lost to Michael Bloomberg. Club member Gale Brewer won the race for the City Council's 6th District with the support of Three Parks; Phil Reed was reelected to the Council. In 2002 after 26 years of service, Assembly Member Ed Sullivan retired. Many people threw their hats in the ring, including Three Parks members Cynthia Doty and Steve Strauss. Cynthia was endorsed; Danny O'Donnell went on to win the primary and general elections.

In 2003, Cynthia Doty succeeded Judy Wood as District Leader. A challenger, Carmen Quinones, failed to get sufficient signatures for a primary and was eliminated from the race. Presidential candidate Howard Dean attended our holiday party. In January 2004, Three Parks endorsed Gov. Dean for President. By autumn, we had the only Kerry-Edwards storefront in town (at 106th Street and Broadway). This huge operation, managed by Lynn Max and District Leaders Bob Botfeld and Cynthia Doty, signed up over 1,000 volunteers for the campaign. Yet another presidential candidate attended a Three Parks Holiday Party—this time, Dennis Kucinich.

Three Parks continued its progressive agenda in 2005 in the successful campaign to protect Social Security from privatization. We also helped defeat Mayor Bloomberg's proposed West Side Stadium. In the fall, despite Three Parks's support, District Leader Cynthia Doty lost the Council primary race to Inez Dickens; Melissa Mark-Viverito won in the 8th CD. Freddy Ferrer lost his quest for Mayor. Then, Cynthia, Bob Botfeld, Lynn Max, Steve Max, and Miki Fiegel led Three Parks in the two-and-a-half year fight to rezone the neighborhood to prevent irresponsible development and preserve affordable housing.

Throughout the long national nightmare of the Bush years, Three Parks marched against the Iraq War. In 2006, Three Parks put its considerable energy into taking back Congress. Led by Lynn and Steve Max, members traveled on many weekends to Westchester to campaign for John Hall and to New Jersey on behalf of Linda Stender. In the City, Three

Parkers made telephone calls for Kirsten Gillibrand and others from a phone bank set up by Assembly Member O'Donnell. Three Parks also joined the ongoing fight against license renewals for the Indian Point nuclear power plant.

In September 2008, Three Parks and Broadway opened the Obama-Biden storefront at 105th and Broadway, where we registered 6,400 voters, sent more than 1,000 volunteers to canvass in Pennsylvania, and made over 35,000 telephone calls to voters. On election night, the police closed Broadway when more than 3,000 of our neighbors poured into the streets around the storefront to celebrate. Phil Reed lived to witness the historic election of Barack Obama, but passed away later that month.

In 2009, we held innumerable candidate forums, endorsed Tony Avella for Mayor, John Liu for Comptroller, and Norman Siegel for Public Advocate, in addition to supporting incumbents for other offices. Cynthia Doty handily won reelection as District Leader against Carmen Quinones. Under the stewardship of Steve Max, Three Parks strenuously advocated for single payer health care and for a public option; Steve also revamped our website. In 2010, the club has focused on banning gas drilling by hydraulic fracturing in New York State and against relicensing Indian Point, in addition to holding candidate forums for the many upcoming elections.

Three Parks has good reason to be proud on our 35th Anniversary. As stalwart members of the grassroots, we continue to fight the good fight to elect progressive Democrats, advocate for economic and social justice, and serve our community. Onwards and upwards!

CLUB ELECTED OFFICIALS

Philip Reed, City Council, 8th District, 1998-2005

Gale Brewer, City Council, 6th District (formerly in the Three Parks area), 2002-present

Lynn Thomas, State Committee, 69th Assembly District, 1989-present

JUDGES

Jane Solomon, Civil Court, 1986; Acting Supreme Court 1993

Carol Edmead, Civil Court 1998; Supreme Court 2003

Anil Singh, Civil Court 2003; Acting Supreme Court 2010

DISTRICT LEADERS

Milivoy Samurovich, Katherine Krouser, Larry Rutkowski, Millie Dweck, Phil Reed, Bea McCalman, Cynthia Doty, Judy Wood, Bob Botfeld

CLUB PRESIDENTS

Milivoy Samurovich, Katherine Krouser, Ed Wallace, Darrell Paster, Douglas A. Kellner, George McGuinness, Janet Wasserman, Steve Strauss, Lynn Thomas, Zev Trachtenberg, Bob Botfeld, Cynthia Doty, Carol Edmead, Dan Cohen, Brenda Morgan, Theresa Canter, Josh Pepper, Daniele Gerard

35th Anniversary Journal

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Edited by Daniele Gerard and Judy Wood

www.ThreeParksDems.org