



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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JAMES DAVIS, *MAYOR*

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For immediate release:

City Holds Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for New Bell Tower

On December 1, the City of Bayonne held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new bell tower in Fitzpatrick Park at 27th Street and Avenue C. The tower is the new home for three bells that used to ring at the former St. Joseph's Church, which was the spiritual home for Bayonne's Slovak community.

At the ceremony, Mayor Jimmy Davis said that Bayonne was "moving forward" and "preserving its past." Addressing long-time St. Joseph's parishioners who were present, Mayor Davis said, "We are not going to forget your church."

Public Works Director Tom Cotter told the audience that the bell tower project "was not a one-man job." He thanked Mayor Davis, the City Council, and property developers for assisting in the bell tower project. Director Cotter also expressed gratitude to Joe Bolowski of Control Services, Rich Picerno of Picerno-Giordano Construction, Doug Gefvert of Verdin Bells, Rob Russo of CME Engineering, Business Administrator Donna

Russo, Chief Financial Officer Donna Mauer, Public Works Superintendent Joe Cannarozzo, and the Public Works Department employees. Mr. Cotter credited former Bayonne resident Robert Papp for showing him a history of St. Joseph's Church that helped with the project.

Former City Council Presidents Joseph L. Makowski and John Halecky, both former St. Joseph's parishioners, addressed the crowd. They were accompanied by their wives, Karen Makowski and Geraldine Halecky, who were also St. Joseph's parishioners. Mr. Makowski expressed sadness about the passing of St. Joseph's Church and also said the occasion of the ceremony was "such a happy day." He said the return of the church bells "brings a smile." Mr. Makowski said he was "proud to be a member of the parish." Thanking Mayor Davis, the City Council, and Director Cotter, former Council President Makowski said the bell tower meant "something deep in the heart."

Mr. Halecky said that he was "probably the oldest member of St. Joseph's," and that he had been a member for over eighty years. He said the church provided "over one hundred years of memories." One of Mr. Halecky's own memories was recalling that he had pulled the church bell cords.

Among those present for the ceremony was Bayonne Purchasing Agent Amy Ockay Dellabella, a former St. Joseph's parishioner, and a niece of Msgr. Clement Ockay, who served as the church's pastor. She was joined by husband Brian Dellabella of the Bayonne Finance Department. They were married at St. Joseph's Church.

The ceremony ended with a ribbon-cutting and the sound of the bells playing
Christmas music in the cold night air.