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JAMES DAVIS, *MAYOR*



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For immediate release:

Hudson County Unveils Statue of Stephen R. Gregg

On Thursday, July 15, Hudson County officials held a special ceremony at Stephen R. Gregg-Bayonne County Park in Bayonne to unveil a statue of Mr. Gregg, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor during World War II. Speaking at 43rd Street and Kennedy Boulevard, County Commissioner Kenneth Kopacz of Bayonne said that the ceremony for unveiling the Gregg statue was his “proudest moment” as a county official. He described the new statue of Stephen R. Gregg as “a symbol of hope and courage.”

County Executive Tom DeGise commended Stephen R. Gregg for his “heroism.” He pointed out that by defending seven wounded men from the Germans in southern France in 1944, Gregg allowed them to father the generations in their families that have followed. County Executive DeGise predicted that the Gregg

statue would become “a teacher of history” for future generations. The statue shows Stephen R. Gregg holding the machine gun that he used to save the lives of seven comrades in arms.

Gina Hulings, Director of the Hudson County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs and Tourism Development, thanked all of the county officials and everyone else who helped move the statue from idea to reality during the past few years.

The statue’s sculptor, J. Brett Grill, who came in from Michigan, said it was “humbling to be here.” He explained why he chose to cast the statue in bronze by calling that metal “the maker of permanence.” The artist said that “the most important stories” are told in bronze. Mr. Grill thanked the veterans who “worked tirelessly to benefit the rest of us.” The bronze was obtained from Ad Astra Art Bronze of Lawrence, Kansas.

Stephen R. Gregg, Jr. recalled that his father was still alive in 1995 when Bayonne Park was renamed in his honor. He said that the statue “cements his legacy.” Mr. Gregg recalled that his father was born Stephen Grzegocky to Polish immigrant parents in The Bronx in 1914. The family moved to Bayonne six months later. His son reported that the future war hero grew up swimming in the Kill Van Kull. This skill helped get him escape an advancing German army in Europe during World War II. Stephen R. Gregg, Jr. said that his father viewed himself as “a

representative of all veterans.” The son described the father as “an ordinary man who did something stupendous.”

Stephen R. Gregg, Jr. said that his father came back from World War II to a hero’s welcome in Hudson County in 1945, when 50,000 people turned out for a parade in his honor. The Congressional Medal of Honor recipient was employed by Hudson County from 1945 to 1995, and finished his career as chief of the court officers for the Hudson County Sheriff’s Office. Stephen R. Gregg passed away in 2005.

At the ceremony, the Hudson County Sheriff’s Office Honor Guard and the Hudson County Department of Corrections performed the presentation and retirement of colors. The Bayonne High School Band honored the military services by playing the Armed Forces Medley. Officer Lokia Gaillard of the Hudson County Department of Corrections sang the National Anthem.