

**May 20, 2022**

**For immediate release:**

### **City of Bayonne Dedicates Makowski Park**

On May 19, the City of Bayonne held a ceremony to dedicate the park at 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue F as Makowski Park in honor former City Council Member Joseph L. Makowski and his late father, former City Council Member Joseph E. Makowski. The newly renovated park includes basketball courts, playground equipment, benches, and picnic tables.

Bayonne Law Director Jay Coffey, the master of ceremonies for the event, said that Makowski Park is “emblematic” of the family’s service to the community, which began when Joseph E. Makowski was named a Zoning Board Commissioner in 1949. The senior Mr. Makowski served later as Second Ward Council Member, Public Works Director, and Zoning Officer. His son served as Second Ward Council Member, Council Member At-Large, City Council President, and Parking Authority Commissioner.

Mayor Jimmy Davis said that the Makowski family “has always given back” to the community. He explained that the park was dedicated to the Makowskis, because of the work the family has done for the people of Bayonne over many decades.

Former City Council Member John Halecky paid tribute to Joseph L. Makowski, with whom he shares East Side roots, membership in the former St. Joseph’s Church, and years of service on the City Council.

Lincoln School Principal Keith Makowski, son of Joseph L. Makowski and grandson of Joseph E. Makowski, recalled playing in the park in his childhood and learning about basketball from his cousin. Principal Makowski also reminisced about his grandfather's cigars and his walks around the East Side neighborhood.

Director Coffey introduced Joseph L. Makowski, calling him a "passionate" man of "unbridled" enthusiasm, and as someone who "didn't go with the flow." Joseph L. Makowski credited his father with giving him a start on his career. He described the senior Makowski, a onetime insurance agent, as having been "a people person," who paid customers' insurance premiums if they were short of money. The younger Joseph Makowski recalled that his father was part of the first group of Council Members when Bayonne began its current mayor-council form of government in 1962. He credited Mayor Francis G. Fitzpatrick with having "laid the foundation of what we have today" during his administration (1962-1974). In that period, the City of Bayonne rebuilt the public library after a fire, constructed the current city hall, and completed an urban renewal program.

Joseph L. Makowski, who often opposed Administration positions while on the City Council (1982 to 1998), said he was proud to have been "the other voice." He said he knew that he had "won" when then-Mayor Dennis P. Collins came into Council meetings to defend Administration policies in person.

At the end of the ceremony, students came from nearby Lincoln Community School for a brief visit to try out the playground equipment.

In addition to those already mentioned, the crowd at the event included members and friends of the Makowski family, former Mayor Richard A. Rutkowski and Mrs. Regina Rutkowski, former Mayor Leonard P. Kiczek and Mrs. Gina Kiczek, Mrs. Geraldine Halecky, Council Members Juan Perez and Gary LaPelusa, Sr., current and former municipal officials, representatives of the Polish-American community, East Side residents, and community activists. The ceremony took place the day before Joseph L. Makowski and his wife Karen were set to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Father John Fencik, Pastor of St. Mary's Orthodox Church, provided the opening prayer and benediction.

Renovation work on the park was completed by Picerno-Giordano Construction. Engineering services were provided by Consulting and Municipal Engineers (CME).