

For immediate release

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Prospect Park Looks to Future with National Search for New Leader Tupper Thomas to retire after 30 years restoring and rebuilding one of world's great parks.

Brooklyn, NY –New York City Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe and Prospect Park Alliance Board Chairman Albert H. Garner announced today that Tupper Thomas, who holds the dual role of Prospect Park Administrator and Prospect Park Alliance President, will be retiring in early 2011.

“The economy is looking brighter, the Alliance’s staff and Board are the strongest they’ve ever been, and we’re on the verge of one of the most transformative projects to date, Lakeside, which will be our greatest single gift to the people of Brooklyn. From this position of strength and growth we look to an even brighter future. Tupper’s inspirational leadership has brought the Park a long way, and we are respectful of Tupper's decision that the timing is right for her. We are profoundly grateful that she leaves behind an organization that is well prepared to continue on the path she has set for us.” Those are the words Garner used to announce the search for a new person to replace Tupper Thomas as the Administrator of Prospect Park and President of the Prospect Park Alliance.

Thomas, who has spent 30 years as the Administrator of Prospect Park and 23 as President of the Prospect Park Alliance, will be leaving when a successor is identified. The selection and appointment of Thomas' successor will be by agreement of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the Prospect Park Alliance, given her joint role as Prospect Park Administrator and President of the Prospect Park Alliance. The search will be handled by the highly regarded national recruiting firm of Phillips Oppenheim, which has conducted a number of similar efforts for major non-profits across the country.

New York City Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, who has often said he believes Prospect Park is the crowning achievement of Olmsted & Vaux, and of restoration efforts by a public-private partnership, said, “Thanks to Tupper and her team, Prospect Park is one of New York City’s greatest assets, and all of us will make sure it stays that way for the people of Brooklyn and for the world.”

In 2004, the Alliance developed a management and governance plan to address a variety of issues including succession planning for both the founder and the founding chairman. Henry Christensen III, who founded the Prospect Park Alliance with Thomas 23 years ago, was succeeded by Mr. Garner in 2007. The plan also

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called for strengthening the Alliance's Board of Directors and establishing senior staff positions that would have greater responsibility and decision making capabilities.

Thomas said, "This has been my life's work. I am looking forward to seeing how all the progress we've made can be built upon. I have so much confidence in the organization we've put together that I feel now is the time to allow Prospect Park to continue its progress and look to the future."

Among the Alliance's proudest achievements have been the restoration of several areas of the Park to the original Olmsted & Vaux vision, the implementation of educational programming, the overall enhancement of community involvement and the tremendous increase in the number of individuals and businesses who support the Park with their dollars and their volunteer time. Under Thomas's watch the number of annual visits to the Park has increased from one-and-a-half million to nine million.

The planned Lakeside project, which will renovate 26 acres of parkland and bring two new skating rinks to the Park, will offer the new leadership an opportunity to continue the amazing record of service that has been the hallmark of the Alliance's past 23 years. 30 years ago, on the day of Tupper's original appointment, veteran TV newsman Gabe Pressman ended his report with this bold prediction, "Will Tupper Thomas's dream come true and Prospect Park be brought back? I think it will."

As Commissioner Benepe noted, "Tupper's proudest achievement was the creation of the Prospect Park Alliance and the joint effort with the City to achieve a renaissance for this master work of landscape architecture. The Alliance and the Park will always be here to serve all of us in good times and bad. Today, we all know that Prospect Park has not only come back but is the best it's ever been. And will keep on getting better."

For information on Prospect Park events, programs, membership and volunteering, call the Park Hotline (718) 965-8999, visit www.prospectpark.org, or dial 311 for all Parks & Recreation information.

In partnership with the City of New York and the community, the Prospect Park Alliance restores, develops, and operates Prospect Park for the enjoyment of all by caring for the natural environment, preserving historic design, and serving the public through facilities and programs. Prospect Park's 585 acres of meadows, waterfalls, forest, lakes, and athletic facilities comprise a masterwork of urban green space.

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