

GROUNDBREAKING AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1964-1965

J U N E 1 9 , 1 9 6 3

*the  
New York City  
Museum of  
Science  
and  
Technology*



Excerpts from transcription of remarks made by New York City and World's Fair officials at the groundbreaking ceremonies of the New York City Museum of Science and Technology, New York World's Fair, Wednesday, June 19, 1963.

Cover: After the Fair, the New York City Museum of Science and Technology, which will be a permanent exhibit, will be operated by a Board of Trustees to include prominent scientific, academic and industrial leaders. Mr. Wallace K. Harrison of the firm of Harrison & Abramovitz, New York, is the architect for the Museum.



DR. ROBERTO DE MENDOZA [Deputy Chief of Protocol]: Mr. President of the Council and Commissioners of the City of New York, Mr. Moses, ladies and gentlemen. We have gathered here this morning for a very happy and momentous occasion. The Museum of Science and Technology which the City of New York will build for our World's Fair will be a monument to the lofty dreams transformed into reality of the executives of the New York City government and the New York World's Fair Corporation.

It is my great pleasure to introduce our first speaker, Mario J. Cariello, President of the Borough of Queens.

THE HONORABLE MARIO J. CARIELLO: Mr. Chairman, Acting Mayor Paul Screvane, Commissioner Moses, Commissioner Reidy, distinguished World's Fair officials and friends. This is an auspicious occasion for the entire country, the City of New York and particularly the Borough of Queens. We are very thankful to Acting Mayor Screvane, Commissioner Moses, Commissioner Reidy, and of course my colleagues on the Board of Estimate for their cooperation in making possible this groundbreaking.

This Museum will be one of the outstanding permanent benefits for the Borough of Queens, the Borough which is growing and expanding so rapidly and whose population and residents so greatly appreciate this cultural benefit. We know that it will be a tremendous incentive to our youth to come here and see the progress that is made and will be made in science and we welcome this



building as one of the finest examples of the benefits that Queens will derive from the City of New York in recognition of its tremendously expanding population.

As President of this fine Borough, I want to say that every possible cooperation will be given by me and our staff at Borough Hall in furtherance of the improvement and continuing benefits for this fine structure. It will be necessary in order to maintain it, to have public participation in the form of contributions of funds, and I am already working on citizens' participation so that we may be able to maintain it in the best possible manner. Thank you.

DR. DE MENDOZA: Thank you, Mr. Cariello. And now our next speaker. I shall only quote Mayor Wagner's statement when he appointed him Commissioner of Public Works: "We searched far and wide to find the best equipped individual to head the Department of Public Works. Mr. Reidy is accepting the position at substantial personal sacrifice, but he believes with me that it is a duty to perform a public service of this sort." I am certain no other words could better describe the personality, deeply ingrained sense of duty and exceptional ability of our next speaker. I have the privilege to present The Honorable Peter Reidy, Commissioner of Public Works of the City of New York.

THE HONORABLE PETER J. REIDY: Acting Mayor Screvane, Borough President Cariello, Commissioner Moses, Mr. Wally Harrison and ladies and gentlemen. This event should establish a record of some sort.

Less than four weeks ago the Board of Estimate granted me permission to negotiate a contract for the foundations of this building. I say it's a sort of record because as a rule in city work we are not able to work this quickly.

I want only to say that we are starting today, we've a lot to do, it will require the most complete and intense cooperation between the Board of Estimate, the City officials, the Fair officials and the exhibitors in order to make this structure a reality. I am sure that all of us feel that way about it and I am sure that cooperation will be forthcoming — it's a definite must and we can proceed only on that basis. Thank you.

DR. DE MENDOZA: Thank you, Commissioner Reidy. There is nothing that I can possibly say that you do not know about our next speaker whose life, dedicated to the service of the public, has been crowned with one glittering success after another. It is my great pleasure to present The Honorable Robert Moses, president of the New York World's Fair Corporation.

MR. ROBERT MOSES: For a long time we were concerned about the conspicuous absence of an adequate exhibit on space and science at Flushing Meadow. We tried in vain every known expedient and device, every legitimate pressure, hard and soft sell and charm, through our most persuasive and skillful representatives and friends, to fill this gap. Suddenly at the last possible moment, due to the lively concern of the City administration, the intervention of Mayor Wagner, the personal enthusiasm of Paul Screvane and the persistence of Guy

Tozzoli, miraculously we solved the problem not only for the Fair's two years, but for a permanent city museum of science.

The Museum of Science and Technology will occupy a strategic, accessible and expandable place in the completed Flushing Meadow Park. It will be a living symbol of the most extraordinary twenty-five years of human progress, discovery and invention since the beginning of recorded history, not only for the fast-growing Borough of Queens, but for all of New York and its visitors.

We have entrusted the design for the museum to Wallace K. Harrison, distinguished architect who was Director of Planning for the Architectural Commission that designed the United Nations Secretariat, and Commissioner Reidy is in charge of construction.

Now I want to give this medallion to my old friend Peter Reidy to keep on his desk where he is now, and when he becomes the chief executive officer of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority.

DR. DE MENDOZA: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Our next speaker is one of the most popular and well-liked men in New York, a shining example of the wonderful opportunities this great City offers to someone with a great personality, outstanding ability, a profound desire to serve the public and the will to succeed. A colonel in the Army Reserve and former deputy mayor, he is the author of the Freedom Writers Law in the City of New York, and it is in great part due to his contagious enthusiasm, resolute convictions and inspired perseverance that

the Museum of Science and Technology will grace the New York World's Fair to remain in the future Flushing Meadow Park as a proud contribution of the City of New York to the advancement of science.

I have the high honor to give you The Honorable Paul R. Screvane, President of the Council and Acting Mayor of the City of New York.

THE HONORABLE PAUL R. SCREVANE: Thank you very much, Dr. De Mendoza. With Commissioner Moses' permission I think we'll take you around to introduce me all the time — you do it so beautifully.

Commissioner Moses, Commissioner Reidy, Borough President Cariello, friends. It is a great personal pleasure for me to participate in these groundbreaking ceremonies for the Museum of Science and Technology. After repeated attempts over the last many years to locate a science museum in New York City, these efforts are finally attaining fruition through the World's Fair Committee. However, like the fabled magic trees of old, this museum will continue to bear fruit, for not only will it serve the Fair as a science pavilion but long after the Unisphere® is set beside the trylon and perisphere as a symbol of great world's fairs of the past, this permanent museum will serve the people of the City, the nation and the world.

It is always gratifying for an elected official to see a public need about to be filled. Our City, renowned for its cultural activities, its museums, its art galleries, its libraries, its concert halls and theatres, has long had a cultural scientific gap in its web of institutions. Today the



Assisting at the groundbreaking for the New York City Museum of Science and Technology are: (left to right) Paul Screvane, Acting Mayor of the City of New York; Peter J. Reidy, Commissioner of Public Works of the City of New York; Robert Moses, president of the Fair; Mario J. Cariello, Borough President of Queens; Guy Tozzoli, Port of New York Authority; and Wallace K. Harrison, architect of the Museum.



Shown on the dais at the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Museum of Science and Technology are: (left to right) Paul Screvane; Mario J. Cariello; Dr. Roberto De Mendoza, Deputy Chief of Protocol at the Fair; Peter J. Reidy; and Robert Moses.





first shovel of earth for this museum is being taken from Flushing Meadow Park. It will be replaced by mortar, stone and steel to house the wonders of science for all to view.

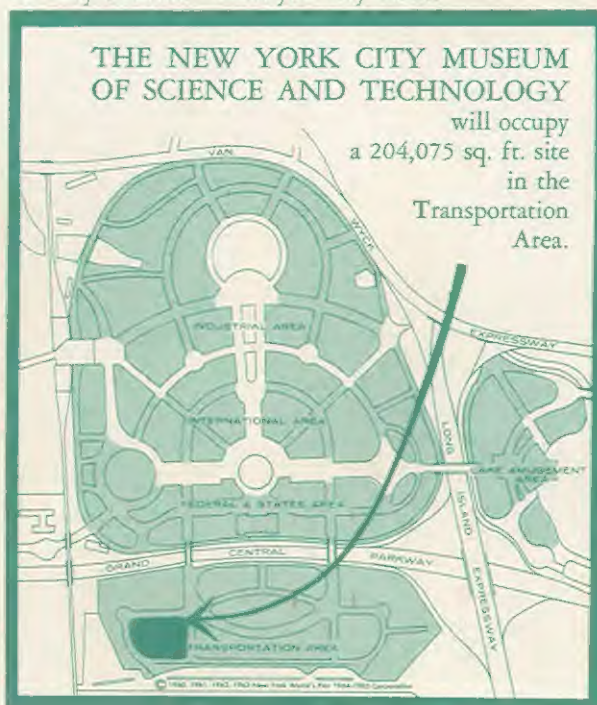
With the race for space between East and West growing in urgency, a recent New York Times editorial put it most succinctly: "Many of the seventy million expected to attend the New York World's Fair will visit the exhibit and get a first-hand view of the interrelationship between a high standard of living and free democratic institutions, demonstrating that man's greatest achievements, materially and culturally, have always been made in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom."

Furthermore, this museum is truly the essence of the democratic cooperation between the City, which contributed three and a half million dollars, the federal government, the World's Fair Committee and private industry.

This science center will be both a repository and an incentive for scientific knowledge and achievement. Benjamin Disraeli once wrote that what art was to the ancient world, science is to the modern. The grandeur of Rome and Greece can be the grandeur of our own world if only we learn to turn the sciences to our own advantage. I believe that the museum will aid in serving such a purpose.

In conclusion I want to pay my respects and pay tribute to a few of the people who have worked so hard to bring about this great facility. Certainly, Commissioner Moses who gave leadership to this project and the fellow who has been the workhorse and has worked continuously on

it, Mr. Guy Tozzoli, and of course the architect who was so imaginative as you can see by this rendition, Mr. Wallace K. Harrison, and all of the many people who have contributed time and effort, our Board of Estimate and our City Council. Thank you very much.



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