International Plaza

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

MAY 2, 1963

Excerpts from transcription of remarks by International Plaza and World's Fair officials at the International Plaza groundbreaking ceremonies, New York World's Fair, Thursday, May 2, 1963.

RICHARD C. PATTERSON, JR. [Chief of Protocol]: Mr. Moses, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. This is a highly important groundbreaking ceremony. The International Plaza will contribute significantly to the success of the Fair.

Our first speaker is Mr. Allen Beach, director of International Exhibits.

ALLEN E. BEACH: Ambassador Patterson, Mr. Moses, Mr. Goldman, Judge Di Falco, ladies, distinguished guests. Governor Poletti is unable to be present at this ceremony, so I will say a few words in his behalf and in behalf of the International Division of the Fair. Several months ago, a group of prominent New York businessmen, including Mr. Irving Goldman and Mr. Arnold Kagan, came to us with the suggestion that a series of small, attractive, easily erected structures grouped together around a plaza, might satisfy the needs of small foreign businesses as well as some of the smaller countries which could not erect their own pavilions. After considering the plan, this area was selected and the contract for International Plaza was signed with Mr. Goldman and his associates.

We are now able to announce that several foreign governments and industries, which had previously declined participation in the Fair because of the expenses of an individual pavilion are now taking part in International Plaza, which, in essence, will be a fair within the Fair.

Our millions of Fair visitors will be able to take a tour

Cover: International Plaza, an attractive complex of buildings, will house the various exhibits of the foreign countries, organizations and firms which will not otherwise be represented in individual pavilions. Ira Kessler & Associates of New York are the architects.

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of the world on a short walk through the Plaza, which will be adjacent to the Swiss Sky Ride terminal and surrounded by the Swiss, Swedish and French Pavilions. I know that Governor Poletti joins me in saying that we in the International Division are very pleased that Mr. Goldman and his associates initiated this idea, it definitely serves a need and will make our international participation much greater. We are all very grateful. Thank you.

RICHARD PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Beach. The next speaker is a man whose tireless efforts on behalf of countless worthy community projects have earned for him the 'Man of the Year' award by the City of Hope. He is the president of International City, Inc., president of Gothic Color Company and director of International Plaza. I am highly pleased to present Mr. Irving Goldman.

IRVING GOLDMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Patterson. Commissioner Moses, Judge Di Falco, Mr. Beach, Mr. Beaton, distinguished gentlemen on the dais and very charming ladies. I am very happy to be here this morning to speak in behalf of this wonderful exhibit. But, of course, I cannot be the only one to take credit for this presentation since it was a collective idea.

I have been very fortunate in being associated with a man who has been at my side constantly, a man whose ideas and whose thoughts are very important. I am referring to Arnold Kagan. Before I tell you about the International Plaza that we plan here, I would like to say that we'd like every country, every person who has some knowledge of the Fair, to participate so that we can bring culture and a better understanding to all people. I know of no other person who has been so anxious to do that as Commissioner Moses.

So, Commissioner Moses, on behalf of the International Plaza, we have a gift for you that has been given us by the Italian artisans. They are part of International Plaza where they will display their many talents. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I present to you this token that carries our esteem and respect.

I thank you very much for coming here. I want to thank The Honorable Surrogate for his presence here and special thanks to The Honorable Robert Moses, the greatest builder of all time.

RICHARD PATTERSON: Ladies and gentlemen, the next speaker is The Honorable Samuel Di Falco, Surrogate of the City of New York.

Presiding at the groundbreaking for International Plaza: (left to right) The Honorable Samuel Di Falco, Surrogate of the City of New York; Mr. Robert Moses, president of the Fair; Mr. Irving Goldman, president of International Plaza. The lovely girls on the bulldozer are representatives of the various exhibitors of International Plaza.

JUDGE DI FALCO: Ambassador Patterson, Commissioner Moses, representatives of the various foreign countries, lovely ladies representing the various nations and my dear friends. I think that we stand here today dedicating and breaking ground for one of the most important projects in this Fair. It is important because in times such as these — with so much chaos, confusion and bickering among nations of the world — a project such as the International Plaza is something which will help bring together the various peoples of the world to participate in a common endeavor, to show their wares, their work, their education, their culture and their desire to be together in a common cause which will help to bring about peace and understanding throughout the world.

I am very happy to be here today and am sure that this project will be the success that you are hoping it will be. Thank you very much.

RICHARD PATTERSON: Thank you, Judge Di Falco. Before presenting our final speaker, I should like to introduce these young ladies to you: Miss Berit Lunde, from Norway; Miss Erika Scot, from Austria; Miss Ada Moran, from Spain; Miss Maria Nilsson, from Sweden; and Miss Frederika Schuurink, from Holland.

The final speaker, more than any other person, is responsible for the tremendous progress we've made at this Fair. I need say no more; I give you the president of the Fair, The Honorable Robert Moses.

ROBERT MOSES: Dick Patterson and friends. What has been said here is absolutely true. We have to have a place for the smaller countries, the smaller exhibits. The Fair is not wholly dependent, or even primarily dependent upon the great big exhibits. We need them also, but we want all the countries that can possibly come here, and many of them can't afford their own separate pavilions. In a way, it's just as well that they can't, because if they can be brought together in a compact area like this one — I think we have something that's unique.

We can't have a Fair consisting exclusively of huge exhibits like General Motors, Ford, Chrysler and the gas industries. They are very important, but they are fairs in themselves. We need to cater to the smaller nations, and that's what we are doing.

I think that all those who observe what goes on here know that we have given a disproportionate amount of time to the smaller countries, and notably to the new countries which have never had experience in this kind

Robert Moses, president of the Fair, presenting the Fair medallion to Irving Goldman, president of International Plaza.

of thing. That's particularly true of the new republics in Africa. They are ambitious, they are enthusiastic, they are proud and they are sensitive.

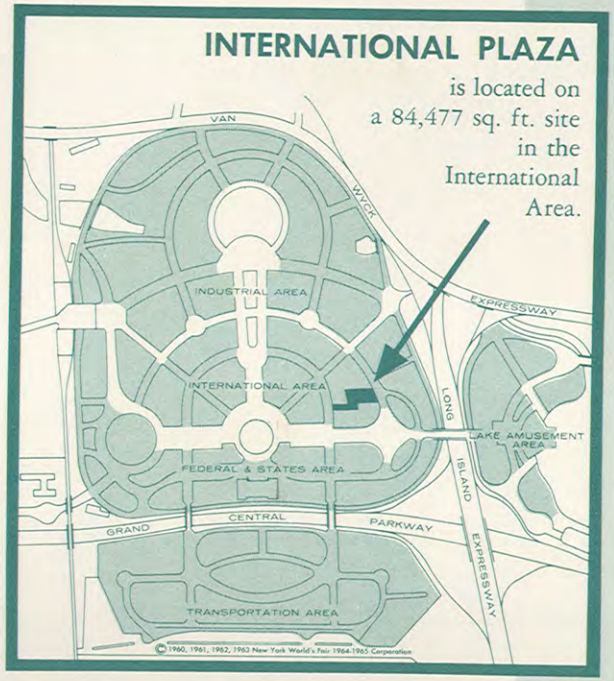
Relatively few people will come to the Fair from abroad compared to the number that will come from New York City again and again — from the suburbs, exurbia and the hinterland. But the impression we make on foreigners is tremendously important, as is the impression that the foreign exhibits make on our people.

As you look around here now, probably you all feel that it is a scene of utter and absolute confusion. Some of our critics are busily spreading the rumor that we are never going to be finished on time, that the highways and buildings and access roads won't be finished. Now I urge you not to pay very much attention to that; we are now at the stage where there seems to be so much confusion, so much dirt and dust flying around that it seems you're never going to get out of it. But it's just a phase that every big construction job reaches — it's just something to live through.

Now those who have been through it again and again are not worried about criticism, and we're not at all worried about these crises and tempests in teapots — it's just

part of the day's work. This place is going to be in good shape, it's going to open on time, and it's going to be finished. I think the Fair is going to have as many visitors as we promised.

RICHARD PATTERSON: Thank you, President Moses. I've just been handed a telegram from Roger L. Stevens, who was scheduled to be here this morning. As most of you know, he is the chairman of the National Culture Center, appointed by President Kennedy. He's a dedicated civic worker. He's a producer who had twelve plays on Broadway last year, and he's a friend of ours. I'd like to read his telegram addressed to Governor Poletti: "I am deeply distressed not to be able to be with you Thursday morning, but I do want to take the opportunity to express my support for International Plaza at the World's Fair. It fills an urgent need at the Fair, giving nations a chance to present their products and their cultural achievements to a huge and varied audience. Also, perhaps most important, it creates a splendid place for the interchange of understanding between peoples of the world toward a lasting and creative peace. Again my sincere regrets for having to miss the ceremony. Signed — Roger L. Stevens."



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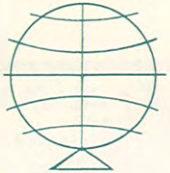

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