



August 2014

ILLUMINATIONS

A quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

'Mayor' of the Loop at Annual Meeting



At the Annual Dinner Meeting Oct. 14, the speaker will be Joe Edwards of Blueberry Hill, the Pageant, the Moonrise Hotel and the Loop Trolley. He will talk about and sign the new, 25th anniversary edition of "St. Louis Walk of Fame: 140 Great St. Louisans," a coffee-table book with color pictures and biographies of every honoree, from Pierre Laclède to Nelly. Charts show the location of each star as well as group-

ing the honorees by birthday, by claim to fame, etc. The new edition was designed by Hope Edwards, who will also attend the dinner. Books will be on sale for \$25.

Edwards began the Walk of Fame in 1989 to make people aware that "cities much bigger than we are have not had the influence we have had" on the national scene, Edwards told the *St. Louis Beacon*. His inspiration was of course the stars on Hollywood Boulevard, but Delmar goes them one better by including a brief biography with each star. Dedication ceremonies have brought many celebrities to University City over the years. Stan Musial, who couldn't make his own dedication, was able to accept for Bob Gibson. Maya Angelou and Grace Bumbry attended together and had a fine time talking to each other. Edwards recalled that Virginia Johnson was "more outgoing" than William Masters, which will not surprise viewers of the Showtime series "Masters of Sex."

Edwards told the *Beacon* he doesn't qualify for the Walk of Fame. He hasn't had a "national influence." But he has quite a bit of local influence, and will make a fascinating speaker at our meeting.

TICKET ORDER FORM

Annual Dinner of the Historical Society of University City
6:30 pm Tuesday Oct. 14 The Pasta House 8213 Delmar Blvd.

Your name and address: _____

Quantity: ___ member tickets at \$35 ___ nonmember tickets at \$40

Please enclose check PAYABLE TO HSUC and send to:

Eleanor Mullin, HSUC President
7162 Delmar Blvd. University City MO 63130

A Message from the President by Eleanor Mullin

Summer has flown, and we look forward to many exciting events, the first of which is Joe Edwards speaking about the Walk of Fame at our annual dinner in October. Our board member, Carol Diaz-Granados Duncan, will present a program on St. Louis' favorite historical event, The 1904 World's Fair. Other programs we are considering are the history of the Faust family, and the many Indian Mounds in the St. Louis area.

Lehman Walker has sent out the request for bids on the repair of the Gates of Opportunity, and we look forward to getting that going. Between

that repair and the Trolley, it will be a busy year in the Loop!

We are redesigning our website, and it should be ready for you to view literally any day now. Check it out at: ucityhistory.org.

Another U. City institution has reached a milestone--it is the 75th Anniversary of the Library. A Gala will take place on Saturday, October 25th at the library, not only to celebrate but to raise funds for improvements to the computer area. I'm pleased to be on the planning committee, and hope to see many of you there.

City Awaits Bids on Lion Repair

On July 28, City Manager Lehman Walker gave the Society a copy of the Invitation to Bid the city has sent out to selected conservators and restoration firms. By August 12, the city expects to receive bids on the job of repairing and restoring The Gates of Opportunity, or Lion Gates. Once all the bids are in, the city will consult on the choice of firm with the Society's Board. "We will work with the Historical Society to see that the Lions are restored," Walker said.

During 2009, the year-long commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Lion Gates' construction, the Society raised funds for an inspection of the Lions, which was carried out by Bob Marti in May 2010. The inspection determined that both statues and pylons are in need of repair and maintenance. The Society is delighted that the city is moving ahead with the restoration. Vice-President Ed Nickels has said, "The Gates of Opportunity are our monument. Like the Statue of Liberty, our lions welcome all to University City and they symbolize a truly remarkable city that we can all be proud of."

Appeal for Information

The Historical Society seeks information on the walkways: Limit Walk in Parkview, Campus and Varsity walks in University Park, and an unnamed walk in University Hills, as well as other walkways that have vanished. These paths are an unusual and little-known feature of University City, and we would like to have some information about them in our archives. If you have any information, please email David Linzee, davidlinzee@yahoo.com.

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Market Sparks Loop Revival

by David Linzee

Once one of the premier shopping streets in the St. Louis area, Delmar fell victim to suburban sprawl and shopping centers in the '50s. The extensive rehabs and ground clearance of the '60s failed to lure commercial developers. By the '70s, the scene on Delmar was bleak. A key event in starting the revitalization of what is now "one of the 10 great streets in America" (according to the American Planning Association) was the opening of Market in the Loop in 1975.

"The biggest question facing the Delmar Loop shopping area is whether, in fact, it is a shopping area anymore," said the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in March 1974, after counting only 55 out of 78 storefronts occupied, and added, "The most notable lack is a grocery." The last supermarket, Martin's, had closed two years earlier because owner Martin Mantia thought he didn't have enough parking space. Lack of parking made it impossible to attract any of the chain supermarkets to Delmar.

Then Barbara Picard, Washington University biologist and biking enthusiast, had an idea for a "Saturday Soulard-type market" (the historic Soulard market downtown was then the only farmer's market in St. Louis) that would draw bicyclists and pedestrians as well as motorists. She shared the idea with Kitty Madeson, director of off-campus housing for Washington U. and new president of the U. City Chamber of Commerce. Madeson thought such a market would help meet the shopping needs of the students living near Delmar, many of whom lacked cars. It would also bring some life to the sidewalks and serve as a community hub.



Opening Day, 1975

Madeson thought that the Loop North parking lot would make a good site for the market, so she approached R. Tinsley Parke, director of the U City Land Clearance and Renovation Authority, which owned the lot. He was enthusiastic about the idea. On June 5, 1974, the City Council guaranteed a \$10,000 loan, at the request of Parke. The plan was to build 18 vending stalls for a three-day a week market selling sell fresh produce only. Mantia would be the manager. The grand opening was scheduled for July.

But when the bids came back, contractors wanted double the amount of money the market supporters had anticipated. The standstill lasted until Parke had a chance encounter with local florist Paul

Gilmore at the Lantern House restaurant. Gilmore was in the Missouri National Guard, and he said the Guard was allowed to work on public service construction projects and might take this one on. Parke went to Jefferson City with State Representative Kenneth Rothman. Governor Kit Bond gave his OK, and the Guard agreed to build the market stalls as a training project.

In November 1974, the 1140th Engineering Battalion from the Farmington-Frederickton area began work.

Construction proceeded steadily despite wet winter weather. Mantia had worked in Loop food markets since the 1940s, and his reputation helped draw vendors. All 15 stalls were taken, and there was a waiting list of almost 40 applicants. Fruit and vegetables would come from Produce Row downtown until later in the spring when fresh local goods became available.

The Loop Market opened on schedule, on a cold and blustery March 1. The ribbon cutting was attended by City Councilmembers, including Elsie Glickert and Larry Lieberman, City Manager Charles Henry and Madeson.

The market drew big crowds right from the start. The City Council received proposals to add a

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Address Service Requested

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flea market and craft bazaar. (The Council decided to stick to food for the time being.) Stores in the area reported an increase in their business on market days. By April, Henry and Parke were talking about enlarging the market. Stalls soon totaled 33. The market's popularity held up and by 1981 stalls were selling dairy products and seafood. Artists and craftspeople displayed their wares. In 1988 Dan Wald, owner of the market, announced that he was going to expand it with an indoor facility, an international food court. Bob's Seafood, the St. Louis Bread Company and Mongolian BBQ were early tenants. The open-air market continued and the City enhanced Market in the Loop Plaza. Now flowers, plants, candies, honey, cheese, bakery, fresh pasta, frozen custard. And falafel were on sale.

Meanwhile, and thanks in part to Market in the Loop, the rest of the Loop was booming. In March 1989, *Post-Dispatch* restaurant critic Joe Pollack wrote, "what a difference a few years

make...Delmar from Eastgate to Kingsland has become a dining, shopping and walking area that few parts of the city can match."

In recent years, the market faded. Wald said that competition from farmer's markets in Tower Grove, Clayton and Kirkwood took a toll, and local regulations hampered operations. The indoor market became a conventional restaurant.. The outdoor market was down to one vendor, Long Acre Farm of St. Charles, which has been there since 1975.

This summer, Saturdays are considerably brighter, thanks to the addition of Midtown Farmer's Market to Market in the Loop, offering locally grown organic produce and artisanal products. Not only that, but Delmar has a grocery store again, with the opening Aug. 7 of United Provisions in The Lofts.