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Waterfront Alliance Honors the 2018 Heroes of the Harbor: Michael Phillips, Cynthia Rosenzweig, and Steven Smith

Board Chair Chris Ward Signals Increased Focus on Climate Change and Resiliency for the Waterfront Alliance

New York, NY—For their dedication in pioneering 21st-century forms of resilience and for the far-reaching effects of their work, **Michael Phillips, Cynthia Rosenzweig, and Steven Smith** have been honored as the [2018 Heroes of the Harbor](#) by the Waterfront Alliance.

Every year, the Waterfront Alliance salutes our Heroes of the Harbor—those individuals whose extraordinary work and ideas have helped revitalize the New York and New Jersey waterways and expand resilience and access for all communities, and in doing so make our harbor an exceptional place to live, work, and play. More than 400 waterfront stakeholders from the business, government, nonprofit, and philanthropic worlds attended the 2018 Heroes of the Harbor gala on the evening of September 25. The event kicked off with the annual Parade of Boats sponsored by [NYC Ferry operated by Hornblower](#).

2018 HONOREES

Michael Phillips is the principle and president of Jamestown LP, an investment and management company. Recognized for his creative leadership in building distinctive urban communities, he is a driving force behind nationally recognized adaptive reuse developments that are environmentally thoughtful and connected to their surrounding communities, including Chelsea Market in New York, Industry City in Brooklyn, Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco, and Ponce City Market in Atlanta. He is interested in the connection between historic industrial waterfront buildings and 21st century innovation, and believes the reuse of these buildings is an essential part of a dynamic city.

Cynthia Rosenzweig has pioneered the international study of climate risks, adaptation, and mitigation, internationally and in the metropolitan region. A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, she joins impact models with climate models to project future outcomes of land-based and urban systems under altered climate conditions. She is a senior research scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies at Columbia University, where she heads the Climate Impacts Group. She is an adjunct senior research scientist at Columbia's Earth Institute, co-chairs the New York City Panel on Climate Change, is associated with the international Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and is involved with a number of prominent scientific groups.

Steven Smith is the owner of Oak Point Property LLC at the South Bronx waterfront. Once polluted and forsaken, Oak Point now is home to healthy wetlands, thriving businesses that utilize the waterways intelligently for maritime commerce, and a future public waterfront walkway. A transformative force behind a sustainable, resilient, and prosperous South Bronx, Mr. Smith is leading the way as the borough begins to reclaim its 75 miles of shoreline. Oak Point has been awarded [Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines](#) (WEDG) certification from the Waterfront Alliance for its remarkable environmental improvements, outstanding resilience, and new public access.

"From an inspirational standpoint, I think the industrial working waterfront can connect to a creative, vibrant, dynamic kind of city in an interesting way," Mr. Phillips said. "To see the work that the Waterfront Alliance and many of its partners have done to revitalize and provide waterfront access to many New Yorkers across economic strata is truly humbling."

Dr. Rosenzweig accepted her honor and explained to the audience why she didn't share many of her colleagues' pessimism on the future of the planet. "Climate change is the significant planetary issue of our time. Many of my fellow scientists are pessimistic. They think it's a done deal; that we'll be losing everything, that we're going to be an ice-free planet, and there's nothing we can do about it. But I don't believe we should be pessimistic," she said. "I think we should pull up our socks and get going and solve it. And the Waterfront Alliance is a great example of how we are actually going to solve climate change."

Mr. Smith was introduced by **Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr.**, who spoke of the great potential of the Bronx's 75 miles of waterfront that is just starting to be tapped, and described Mr. Smith as an "unsung hero."

"It was Steve who understood, like very few waterfront property owners do, the value not only of cleaning it up and fixing it up, but also allowing the community to have access to it," Borough President Díaz said, and then spoke to Mr. Smith directly. "You said no to the proposal which was going to bring garbage from other part of the city to Hunts Point and Oak Point. You said no when they wanted to build a jail. You decided you were going to create jobs there. You decided to build waterfront resilience. Today you have a marine port terminal bringing materials and supplies. And because of Steve, 1.5 million to 2 million trucks are taken off our streets on an annual basis."

"There are a lot of folks in New York who are as crazy about the waterfront as I am," Mr. Smith said when he came to the podium to accept his Heroes of the Harbor award, noting his community relations work as critical to his success. "Maybe my ideas aren't so crazy. The success and the recognition that I've gotten is due to my efforts and also to the support and efforts of my wife, my partner Ken Cohen, the Waterfront Alliance, and all the folks who have come together and have worked around the clock to help build a sustainable waterfront at Oak Point. I thank you all, and I thank the Waterfront Alliance for giving me this award."

At the Heroes of the Harbor gala, **Chris Ward**, chair of the Waterfront Alliance board of trustees, issued an impassioned call for the Waterfront Alliance and all its partners and supporters to lead the way in adapting to the new reality of climate change.

"I'm tired of moral equivalency. I'm tired of saying this is an existential challenge," Mr. Ward told the crowd. "The Waterfront Alliance is part of a group of people and organizations that have begun to recognize that. Our challenge is to build on what the Waterfront Alliance has already done—we've given the communities of New York the Harbor Scorecard, a way to understand how your community is ranked in terms of access to the water and water quality; we've created the whole notion of WEDG, Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines; and more. But in some respects all of that has not been enough. The challenge for the Waterfront Alliance is now to take all of us to the next level, to a political focus, to a capacity to deliver, to not allow the debate to become confused and reduced to relativism. Addressing climate change is paramount. This is the challenge for the Waterfront Alliance."

Heroes of the Harbor was generously sponsored by:

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