



Press Release

Elizabeth Bracken-Thompson, Chair, Friends of Westchester County Parks, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FRIENDS OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARKS APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR

The Board of Trustees of the Friends of Westchester County Parks, Inc. has appointed former Westchester County Parks commissioner Joseph A. Stout as its new executive director.

During his more than 30-year career, Stout made countless contributions in the field of parks, recreation and conservation in various local communities, as well as in his capacity as county parks commissioner for more than seven years until his retirement last year. As commissioner, he oversaw an operating budget of \$53 million and a capital budget of \$250 million and supervised a staff of more than 340 annual employees, nearly 1,000 summer staff, and the operation of more than 50 parks encompassing over 18,000 acres of parkland. Under his direction, Westchester County Parks became the first county in New York to be accredited by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

Elizabeth Bracken Thompson, chair of the Friends organization, said, “We are delighted to have such an inspired leader and dedicated advocate at the helm of our organization. Thanks in great part to his enthusiastic support and guidance, the Friends of Westchester County Parks today manages more than \$2.4 million in assets and provides over \$300,000 annually in support to the County Parks Department. To say that Joe knows the parks inside and out is an understatement. His insight will be invaluable.”

The Friends of Westchester County Parks, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is securing and administering private funds that support the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation. Funds raised through membership fees, cash or other donations are entrusted to the Friends for the sole benefit of county parks. Under Bracken-Thompson’s leadership Friends has overseen \$3 million in funding pass through its accounts. Through its operations, Friends and the subsidiary corporation Westchester

Concessions, employed almost 120 people, primarily Westchester residents, paid nearly \$90,000 in federal and state taxes and used over 50 Westchester-based businesses for products and services.

Friends support volunteer efforts in the Parks department that garnered nearly 30,000 hours of service to the park system valued at approximately \$600,000. The organization also helps provide such programs as the popular Screenings under the Stars summer outdoor movie series at Kensico Dam Plaza, the winter indoor farmers markets at the Westchester County Center, and the annual Slam Dunk high school basketball tournament in December.

Stout said, “I am thrilled to be designated executive director of this very worthwhile valuable organization and I look forward to continuing to work with this dedicated group of volunteers. Together, we will help to keep our award winning park system clean green and growing, and provide the best recreational programs and services that are available to Westchester County residents.”

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