

Blumenfeld Leaves His Green Thumbprint On Port

By **Christina Claus** - July 12, 2018



Myron "Mike" Blumenfeld reads to Port Washington children. (Photo from the Port Washington Public Library)

Port Washington wouldn't be as green as it is today without Myron "Mike" Blumenfeld. While Blumenfeld held a plethora of titles—including cofounder of Residents Forward (formerly Residents For A More Beautiful Port Washington), founder of the Port Washington Parks Conservancy (PWPC), a two-term Port Washington Public Library board trustee, founder of the Josh Blumenfeld Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee and a member and former chairman of the New York State Sierra Club—his clear goal was always to preserve the environment and protect the natural landscapes of Port Washington and the Town of North Hempstead. At 90 years old, Blumenfeld died on July 1, leaving behind his impact on Port Washington as an environmental advocate and community leader.

“His impact on Port Washington has been immense,” said Port Washington Parks Conservancy president Jennifer Wilson-Pines. “In some ways Myron had a hand in practically every green space that has been beautified in Port. He touched so many people in town not only with his environmental work with both Residents and the Conservancy, but his love of the library, teaching in the ESL program, his scholarship for Schreiber students and just his amazing ability to turn total strangers into buddies with one conversation. He was vital and curious and always up for a new challenge. Unlike most of us, when he saw something that wasn’t right, he didn’t say, ‘Someone should do something about this.’ He said, ‘This would be a great project,’ and plunge right in.”

In 1968, Blumenfeld was the driving force that created Residents Forward around a kitchen table with Eric Pick, Renee Greenspan and Betty Forquer with the goal of beautifying Port Washington by planting trees, flowers and bushes throughout the community.

“In many ways during the early years of Residents, Mike was synonymous with the organization, and they were joined at the hip,” said Residents Forward chairman Curt Trinko. “Mike was the individual that made the Port community reflect upon and recognize its many wonderful qualities, and urged them to direct more energies toward its promise of becoming the most vibrant and beautiful community on the North Shore of Long Island. This community focus was a major goal for Mike. It was his quest to awaken the Port community to a full realization and appreciation of its present gifts, and to build a consensus in the citizenry of the need to protect these positive qualities. And to then strive together to achieve better tomorrows for all present and future residents of the Port Washington peninsula.”

The grand opening of Stannards Brook County Park. Standing: former Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Jon Kaiman. Seated: Holly Byrne, Jennifer Wilson-Pines, her daughters and Myron "Mike" Blumenfeld

Soon, Blumenfeld also proved to be an environmental advocate. When then Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Michael Tully proposed a solid waste landfill on Hempstead Harbor for the town's garbage, Residents brought in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to regulate landfills on Long Island, which led to the requirements of landfill liners and water and air testing around the perimeters of landfills. After data was found regarding the hazardous outputs of landfills, the DEC and US Environmental Protection Agency closed all landfills on Long Island.

Another environmental cause Blumenfeld took on with Residents was the anti-incinerator fight against the Town of North Hempstead's proposal for a 990 ton per day mass burn garbage incinerator to be located in the Sand Pits on Hempstead Harbor in 1986. Blumenfeld was integral in urging the town's building department to stop allowing restaurants to be built on

sites containing toxic wastes, supporting the government funded program to remove dozens of abandoned barges then located in Hempstead Harbor and advocating for a bay-to-bay trail system from Plandome on Manhasset Bay around the Port Washington peninsula and continuing on Hempstead Harbor to Roslyn. Blumenfeld also pushed former Town of North Hempstead Supervisor May Newburger to purchase the two acre parcel of open space adjacent to the closed Main Street School—which became Landmark on Main Street—and soon created the park that Newburger named after the environmental advocate, Blumenfeld Family Park.

“It is with deep sorrow that I learn of the passing of Myron Blumenfeld,” said Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Judi Bosworth, who worked closely with Blumenfeld on many projects. “Myron was a true environmental advocate and had a tremendous impact on projects throughout our Town of North Hempstead community, especially in Port Washington. Myron’s activism behind many town projects included preserving the space that is now Blumenfeld Family Park in Port Washington, a beautiful addition to the town which will live on in his memory.”

At the New York State level, Blumenfeld was appointed to be the Long Island Parks Commissioner to oversee and monitor all of the parks throughout Long Island. Blumenfeld was also the former chairman of the New York State Sierra Club and helped form the club’s first Long Island chapter.

In 2003, Blumenfeld moved to Carlton Avenue, noticed that Stannards Brook County Park had been neglected for many years and called up friends Eric Pick and Wilson-Pines to help with his next project. Soon, the Port Washington Parks Conservancy was born, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to restore, enhance and preserve the parks in Port Washington. After securing donors, the conservancy hired landscape architect Geoffrey Roesch to create a plan for the park with an open running stream with input from the community, elected officials, the Port Washington Water Pollution Control District, the Port Washington Water District and local environmental groups. The park was brought back to life with the rebuilding of structures to alleviate flooding, regrading, building of new bridges over the brook, walkways and benches, the removal of invasive plants and planting of appropriate natives. Wilson-Pines explained that Blumenfeld was also involved in fighting to have Alvin Petrus Park preserved when it was proposed to be taken for senior housing, and then restoring the park.

Within the Port community, Blumenfeld created the Josh Blumenfeld Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee, an organization named in memory of his son who tutored English as a second language students. Blumenfeld also served two five-year terms on the Port Washington Public

Library (PWPL) Board of Trustees from 2006 to 2016 and volunteered in the children's room for several years as part of Myron and Lucy Storytime for children of all ages with children's librarian Lucy Salerno.

"One of the pillars of public libraries is that they be accessible for everyone in the community," said PWPL director Keith Klang. "Myron knew and believed in this mission. He cared deeply in engaging young children in story time, he delighted in the expansion of our teen services and he regularly attended many of the concerts and performances for adults. He was a trustee and volunteer who deeply cared for the freedom of information, and his curious spirit will always be remembered fondly by the entire Port Washington Public Library family."

[Click here for Myron "Mike" Blumenfeld's full obituary.](#)

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