

TEDDY PARK OPENING
TEDDY KOLLEK AWARD - 2013
REMARKS BY ALAN HASSENFELD

Good Evening.

Thank you.

But first, let me apologize for the rain last night. But my friend, Danny Mimran, who you all know, had just put the grass in for the Park – and asked me for the miracle of rain for his grass. So, miracles do happen.

Aristotle once said – “Honor belongs to those bestowing it – not those receiving it....

Thank you, Jerusalem Foundation and its global community, especially my peers in America.

Thank you to our Israeli Family, the Rafaeli's.

Above all, thank you to my family who are here tonight – Susie, Michael and Alex; my sister Ellie; my beloved wife Vivien who puts up with my Don Quixotian dreams; and, of course, my Mom, whom you all know as Sylvia. Thank you for having me, and later, I hope you enjoy your early Mother's Day gift.

Let me also congratulate my fellow honorees on their most deserved honor – Julia and Harry Koschitzky of Canada; Sonja Dinner of Switzerland, and of course, our Ruthie.

All of my life, I have been involved with toys and children's entertainment. Some say I think like a child – so close your eyes for a moment and pretend it is an hour later and we children would say:

Starlight, star bright – First star I see tonight – Wish I may, wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight.

That wish is to have Teddy and the Kollek Family's dream live on forever and a day. And may this wish become reality. A wish of community, co-existence and culture – A dream of east and west – old and new, meeting in a “no man's land” and coming together in unity – A dream of making Jerusalem a “green city.”

Nearly fifty years ago, Teddy Kollek and a small group of friends and visionaries came together in New York to establish what would become The Jerusalem Foundation. In the ensuing years, friends of Jerusalem from around the world worked together to enable Jerusalem to become the special world class capital it is.

Teddy's vision is as prescient today as ever – certainly as Mayor Barkat and we know, the needs and challenges of the city are as great as ever.

This Park, which we inaugurate tonight, will serve not only as a lasting testimony to Teddy and all those who have helped maintain and build the modern-day Jerusalem, but as importantly, we know this will become a vibrant destination – for Jerusalemites, Israeli's and all who come to this eternal city.

Our vision for the Park is that it will serve to draw families – young and old – from Israel and abroad – who will say to all that this is a must-see magical destination for inspiration.

It has been said that the future is not something we enter – it is something we create together. It is to those who have created and will continue to create the future that we dedicate this Park.

Let me close with a paraphrased thought I once received:

May we bring:
Love where there is hatred
Healing where there is pain
Harmony where there is discord
Light where there is darkness
Hope where there is despair
Peace where there is strife.

May this world be a better place, and let it begin with us making Jerusalem the most special of cities as Teddy envisioned.

Thank you for this honor.