



NEWS RELEASE

City of New Rochelle, New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2014

Dee/Davis Family, City Applaud Renaming Library Green as “The Ruby Dee Park” ***Two-Day Film Festival Salutes Late Actress October 4,5***

To honor the legacy of legendary actress Ruby Dee, Library Green will now be known as “The Ruby Dee Park at Library Green.” Members of the Dee/Davis family joined the City of New Rochelle and County of Westchester on Thursday, October 2 to make that announcement and highlight this weekend’s memorial tribute/film festival on Saturday and Sunday.

An extraordinary actress who performed on stage, film, radio and television in countless acclaimed roles, Ms. Ruby Dee was also a leading advocate for civil rights as well as a producer, writer, poet, journalist, mother, grandmother, and wife of actor Ossie Davis--from 1948 until his death in 2005. Ms. Dee was also a generous member of the New Rochelle community until her passing this past June. Dee and Davis were proud to call New Rochelle home since 1963. The New Rochelle Public Library Theatre and Library Green were named for Ossie Davis in 2005 and the renaming of Library Green for Ruby Dee is anticipated for spring 2015.

The renaming of Library Green was the recommendation of a commemoration committee convened by New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson and chaired by Councilmember Jared Rice. Members included Dr. Hasna Muhammad, Ms. Dee’s daughter, and her husband; Rev. Dr. Allen Paul Weaver Jr., Alvin Clayton, Linda Tarrant-Reid, Michelle Sanchez-Boyce and City Historian Barbara Davis.

Davis family members noted, “Our parents were true New Rochelleans for more than 50 years and were always proud to call this beautiful city home. For us, growing up in New Rochelle was a wonderful experience. To have our mother recognized in this manner, right next to the Ossie Davis Theatre in the Library complex, is both touching and meaningful to all of us.”

Mayor Bramson stated, “Library Green park represents so much of what Ruby Dee held dear- beautiful gardens, a space welcoming of all ages and ethnicities, and a platform for arts and culture- not to mention our historic Walk of Fame. It is a fitting location for a tribute.”

“Renaming Library Green for our beloved Ms. Dee insures that her legacy and accomplishments will remain in the forefront for generations to come,” said Councilmember Jared Rice. “On behalf of the committee, we thank the County of Westchester for their wholehearted support of our recommendation and look forward to the celebration of rededication in the spring.”

County Legislator Jim Maisano of New Rochelle said, “In the eyes of the world Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis were major celebrities and stars of stage and screen but to New Rochelle residents they were very much a part of our community.”

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TRIBUTE TO MS. RUBY DEE OCTOBER 4,5 AT NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

On Saturday, October 4 and Sunday, October 5, the public is invited to join Ms. Dee’s family and local friends for a free, two-day film festival celebrating the remarkable life of this extraordinary woman. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

On Saturday, October 4th from 6:30 – 8:30 pm, the film, *Naming No. 2*, will be shown. In 2005, at the age of 80, Ruby Dee traveled from her home in New Rochelle to New Zealand to star in director Toa Fraser's film, *No. 2*. Although never released in U.S. theaters, the film, (later titled *Naming No.2*), won the 2006 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award. Ms. Dee received great acclaim for her starring role as the Fijian matriarch, Nanna Maria, who summons her large and disparate family members together for a traditional, reuniting feast – an opportunity to name her successor and impart her wisdom. A discussion will follow the 90-minute film.

The event on Sunday, October 5th, will be in three parts:

Beginning at 1:30 pm, film clips from *With Ossie & Ruby* will be shown. The groundbreaking PBS series of 26 half-hour programs that Dee and Davis conceived, co-hosted, performed and co-produced from 1980 – 1982 was “One media outlet where Dee and Davis found the space to exercise their creative voices, particularly Dee's talents as a writer and producer,” wrote Sharon D. Johnson in *Black Issues Book Review*, May 2005.

At 3:30 pm, “Hands Upon the Heart,” will be shown. This 90-minute film presents highlights from the *With Ossie & Ruby* series, including drama, comedy, and vignettes of American life written by some of America’s greatest authors. It also includes two powerful shows: "Solo Song for Doc" by James Alan McPherson, starring Ossie and Roscoe Lee Browne; and "How I Got Ovah," in which Ruby and Ossie pay a gospel tribute to the poet Carolyn M. Rodgers, with Billy Preston and the Dallas Community Baptist Church Choir. A reception with light refreshments will follow.

At 6:00 pm, there will be a second viewing of the 90-minute film, *Naming No. 2*.

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