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Speeches Series

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TEXT OF SPEECH--RECEPTION-MEETING  
OF THE NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE  
FESTIVAL

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REMARKS BY  
MAYOR ROBERT F. WAGNER

AT  
RECEPTION-MEETING OF THE  
NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

GRACIE MANSION

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 1965  
4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

I AM DELIGHTED TO WELCOME THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE TO GRACIE MANSION THIS AFTERNOON.

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO, FREE SHAKESPEARE WAS ONLY A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM."

YET TODAY, AS FAR AS FREE SHAKESPEARE IS CONCERNED, "TO BE OR NOT TO BE" IS NO LONGER THE QUESTION. IT IS HERE AND IT IS HERE TO STAY. THE NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, DESPITE ITS RELATIVE YOUTH, IS A PERMANENT CULTURAL INSTITUTION OF THIS CITY.

JOE PAPP'S GREAT FIGHT FOR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE HAS BEEN WON.

FOR THIS ACHIEVEMENT, NEW YORK HAS MANY PEOPLE TO THANK -- NOT ONLY JOE PAPP, BUT ALSO THE MEMBERS OF THE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL BOARD, THE MEMBERS OF THE MAYOR'S COMMITTEE AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARTS AND FRIENDS OF THE ARTS WHO HAVE CREATED AND SUSTAINED ONE OF OUR CITY'S MOST REMARKABLE ATTAINMENTS.

-MORE-

ON TOP OF THE LIST ARE SUCH  
DISTINGUISHED NAMES AS GEORGE DELACORTE,  
FLORENCE ANSPACHER, STANLEY LOWELL,  
ALFRED AND DOROTHY STRELSIN,  
CHARLES GRACE, STEPHEN CURRIER,  
LEA GOLDWATER, ELSA MAURY,  
IRVING MAIDMAN, MILTON BERGERMAN,  
RACHEL ARMOUR, AARON FROSCH, LEO FIDLER,  
GEOFFREY GATES, FREDA MAJZLIN,  
JEROME NEUMAN, WILLIAM LEWIS AND  
GORDON HAMMER.

THE CROWDS WAITING TO GAIN  
ENTRANCE TO THE DELACORTE THEATRE IN  
CENTRAL PARK ON SUMMER EVENINGS  
CONSTITUTE THE MASS OF EVIDENCE OF THE  
ACHIEVEMENT IN QUESTION.

I AM SURE THAT THOSE LONG LINES OF  
PLAYGOERS ARE A PARTICULAR SOURCE  
OF PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION TO THE  
MAN WHOM WE PARTICULARLY HONOR TODAY.

AS YOU ARE ALL WELL AWARE,  
JOSEPH MARTINSON HAS ABLY SERVED AS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
THE FESTIVAL FOR FIVE YEARS. HE HAS  
POURED HIS SINGULAR TALENTS AND  
ENERGIES INTO THE MAMMOTH TASK OF  
MAINTAINING A FAR-REACHING CULTURAL  
ENTERPRISE, AND HE HAS DONE SO  
WITHOUT SEEKING HONORS OR CREDIT.

NEW YORK HAS LONG BEEN THE BENEFICIARY OF HIS SERVICE TO THE CITY CENTER; MOST PARTICULARLY THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET; THE INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCED STUDY OF THEATRE ARTS; AND MOST RECENTLY THE MUSEUM OF EARLY AMERICAN FOLK ARTS.

IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT SUCH A MAN SHOULD BE INTIMATELY LINKED WITH THE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL.

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS STARRING ROLE IN BRINGING THE THEATRE OF SHAKESPEARE TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK, I AM PROUD TO PRESENT JOSEPH B. MARTINSON WITH THE NEW YORK CITY HANDEL MEDALLION FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO THE ARTS.