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**Speeches Series**

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**TEXT OF SPEECH--CORNERSTONE  
LAYING OF NEW SCHOOL, ST.  
ATHANASIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**September 26, 1965**

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**REMARKS BY MAYOR ROBERT F. WAGNER  
AT CORNERSTONE LAYING OF NEW SCHOOL,  
ST. ATHANASIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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**SUNDAY - 4:00 P.M.  
SEPTEMBER 26, 1965  
SOUTHERN BOULEVARD AND INTERVALE AVENUE  
BRONX, NEW YORK**

THE LAYING OF THIS CORNERSTONE IS AN INSPIRING AND DEEPLY MEANINGFUL EVENT FOR ME. IT IS AN OCCASION WHICH UNITES ME WITH AN OLD FRIEND IN A NEW AND WONDERFUL VENTURE. MONSIGNOR O'BRIEN AND I GREW UP TOGETHER ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK, AND HIS PARENTS WERE CLOSE FRIENDS OF MINE. OUR ASSOCIATION IS ONE THAT I HAVE ALWAYS TREASURED.

THERE IS A PERSONAL REASON WHY THIS DEDICATION MEANS MUCH TO ME. WITHIN THIS SCHOOL, CONTAINED IN ITS CONVENT, IS THE SUSAN E. WAGNER MEMORIAL CHAPEL.

MONSIGNOR O'BRIEN TELLS ME THAT VERY SOON THE FINAL ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS WILL BE COMPLETED AND THE DOORS TO THE SCHOOL OPENED.

DURING THIS YEAR, THE NEW SCHOOL WILL BE THE SITE FOR THE EDUCATION OF 675 YOUNGSTERS. NEXT YEAR, AFTER THE OLD SCHOOL UNDERGOES A REFURBISHING, THERE WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL 425 CHILDREN COMING HERE FOR THEIR EDUCATION. ELEVEN HUNDRED YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE RECEIVING EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION THROUGH THE FACILITIES OF THE ST. ATHANASIOUS CHURCH.

A BUILDING LIKE THIS IS NOT AN INEXPENSIVE UNDERTAKING. IN FACT, THE LAND, CONSTRUCTION, AND FURNISHINGS COST CLOSE TO \$2 MILLION. TO INCUR SUCH A BURDEN IS A MOST COURAGEOUS ACT AND ONE WHICH, I HOPE, WILL BE RECEIVED WITH THE VERY GENEROUS SUPPORT IT DESERVES.

THIS BUILDING IS MORE THAN A SCHOOL AND A CONVENT. IT IS A HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH WILL SERVE THE NEEDS OF MANY PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE HUNTS POINT COMMUNITY. BESIDES ITS 16 CLASSROOMS, IT CONTAINS AN ALL-PURPOSE AUDITORIUM. AND IN THE EVENINGS, THE SCHOOL WILL BE OPEN TO ALL -- TO PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS -- FOR SPECIAL ADULT CLASSES IN CITIZENSHIP, ENGLISH, AND FOR CREDIT UNION ACTIVITIES.

WHEN I COME HERE TO VISIT MONSIGNOR O'BRIEN, I FIND AN ATMOSPHERE OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE, SERIOUS STUDY, AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITY. THIS IS A HEALTHY BLEND, WHICH I FIND REFRESHING AND CONSTRUCTIVE.

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THIS IS A COMMUNITY WHICH HAS UNDERGONE MANY CHANGES SINCE MONSIGNOR O'BRIEN AND I GREW UP TOGETHER. I KNOW THAT SUCH CHANGES CAN CAUSE STRESS AND HARDSHIP. BUT AFTER COMING HERE, I KNOW, TOO, HOW MUCH CAN BE DONE TO EASE THOSE STRESSES AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL WHO LIVE HERE.

I HAVE ENJOYED BEING A PART OF THIS CEREMONY. I THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME.

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