

# POLICY AND DESIGN FOR HOUSING

Lessons of the Urban Development Corporation 1968-1975

**OPERATIONS:** How the UDC Program Worked  
Panel 1, June 11, 2005, 9:15 - 10:45 AM

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Symposium Saturday June 11, 2005, 9:00am–6:30pm

@ CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue at 34th Street

## STUDENT PRESENTATION:

Lauren Tenney - Student, Environmental Psychology, CUNY Graduate Center

## PANELISTS:

Linda Myers - Former Project Manager UDC Regional Offices

Robert Litke - Director, Department of Planning and Design, City of Houston, TX, Former Executive VP, Roosevelt Island Development Corporation

Eugene Norman - Former UDC Project Manager, Design and Construction

Jerome Belson - Executive Director American Builders & Owners Association of Greater N.Y.

**MODERATOR:** Christine Flynn - Director of Real Estate, UJA Federation of New York; Former UDC Executive VP and CEO Roosevelt Island Development Corporation

## TED LIEBMAN: (Introductory statement)

Be sure to visit the companion Exhibition at the Center for Architecture and see the films that were recorded of many of the architects. An extraordinary 25 minute piece by Joe Wasserman and Norman Hoberman shows their recent visit to their UDC Coney Island project, which is a very emotional piece. The two architects went back to look at their work, and they discuss it. So there's an awful lot of material sitting at that exhibition for three months and I hope everyone goes back to see it. Last night was the opening panel discussion and a reception and a time to enjoy with old friends. This legacy on a website will allow all of us who participated in this marvelous experiment (the housing program of UDC) to review our work. Students in the future will be able to go to the website and understand, if nothing else, the energy involved in the UDC building program. In fact, we're very concerned that if any of the energy from those years comes into the website, it may black out or maybe pop off the screen!

Many of us become very emotional when we discuss those years, because in a sense we can't believe we did what we did when we did it - because we were all rather young. But we did it basically because it was a time of leadership and vision. It was a very different time than today and it was a time that we heard about last night from very eloquent panelists on the Origins Panel. It was a time when there was strife in a lot of areas, and tragedy that affected the work of UDC. But Ed Logue turned it into a very positive force to create communities that exist today, as we hear from the students, with lots of successes that we can all, all of us who were involved, be very proud of.

So, we'll have four panel discussions today. The first is called Operations and we'll go through what we really did when we were there, talking about some of the inner workings of the organization. The next panel focuses on Design and Quality. As I said last night, our chief

architect was Ed Logue the lawyer, who clearly acted more like an architect than almost anyone I've ever known, and cared so deeply, not only about design in terms of beautiful facades, but about people's lives inside the developments. And therefore he allowed a whole lot of research to happen and a lot of experimentation. The third panel, right after lunch (and there's a wonderful lunch for everyone upstairs) will be on the Political Actions that happened during that period. You heard last night in the first question and answer period about the tension between people who look back and focus on what UDC didn't do properly, perhaps because of political limitations, and people who remember some of the things that UDC did very well. And the last panel is a panel on the Future. And the whole purpose of this day is to engage in a little bit of looking back in order to better be able to look forward in a time when it's very difficult to come up with solutions. If we could come away today with one germ of an idea that would take people in this direction, after having learned about what we did here, to think of new ideas to help form better housing and communities for lower-income people in the future, then we will have accomplished a great deal, aside from the legacy of giving our students a body of work to look at. The first panel is being moderated by Christine Flynn. (She was the most gorgeous thing I'd ever met, when I was very young at UDC.)

CHRISTINE: Very young!

TED: She was an attorney at UDC, and now heads the Real Estate Department of the UJA. At UDC, she was involved in Roosevelt Island. I don't want to go through biographies. Let Christine and the Operations Panel begin. Thank you. (applause)

CHRISTINE: Good morning. I hope that the panel's substance is up to the energy that you all display by getting up at this hour. We expected about five people here, so congratulations to you all. I think that our mandate this morning is to describe to you how UDC did what it did. As you all know, and as was described in the panel last night, UDC had these extraordinary legislative powers, and it had a financial capacity that I don't think has ever been assembled in a single state agency, at least a housing agency, before or since. UDC had the seed money, as was described last night, to acquire land, to hire programmers to work with local government, to develop housing planning. UDC could hire architects directly and did. It developed development standards for architecture. It encouraged architectural innovation. It had the legislative power ... (Oh, I'm sorry, the students are supposed to make a presentation first.)

TED: Finish your introduction and then...

CHRISTINE: OK. It had the legislative power to bypass local zoning, which meant that it bypassed a lot of local political process which can slow up housing development. It had the power to impose the NY State building code, as opposed to local building codes. It hired contractors to build its projects. It supervised the construction itself and certified the construction itself. It financed this construction itself. It set the rents and it set the management, housing management policies. So, it had very little oversight and it had very little obligation to consult, which was part of the reason it made it possible to develop so much so quickly. And now I think we have a presentation from some students.

LAUREN TENNEY (Student): Good morning. My name is Lauren Tenney. I'm a student at the City University Graduate Center, Environmental Psychology Program. I'm going to be showing some of the research that we did this year on Roosevelt Island and on Marcus Garvey Village, looking at these housing communities from an operations perspective.

One of the lessons that we learned from Roosevelt Island was that people really appreciated the design. One gentleman thought that there was something very special about it, but that the courtyards weren't being used, and that it wasn't being implemented as fully as it could be, but that there was something that they really liked about it. The overall perspective of the maintenance of Roosevelt Island, particularly the Eastwood building complex exterior: about 71% thought it was somewhat well maintained and 21% thought it was not at all well maintained. People really have a real sense of community on Roosevelt Island and there was a real concern for the environment, and the cleanliness and the upkeep.

Upkeep and upgrading at Marcus Garvey Village was a bit of a different story. There was a general theme that came out of it, that management patched and didn't fix, and as we walked around we saw this, evident in duct tape and wood being patched, instead of actually fixing it. About half of the people thought the appearance was good, and about 29% thought that the appearance was poor. How can continuity in finance and management insure the implementation vision that UDC originally set? We believe that they have to provide social programs as well as promote community. 30 years ago, when the buildings were first put up, they matched the vision that UDC set up. People felt comfortable letting their children play, a stimulus toward getting all the families together, playing in the mews together. But the point, they said, is that it's not like that anymore.

We found was that there was a real disconnect between what was happening in management and what was expressed by the design ideas and vision of UDC. Through the details of physical form, social fabrics were created. But now, instead of developing community and putting eyes on the street and having civic associations, and using the community center the way it was originally envisioned, they really put in structures of a culture of surveillance with mechanical cameras and gates, in order to keep the community protected. We really believe that in the future, if people really put a focus on and try to put teeth to the ideas of providing social programming, that it will promote community and provide a greater sense of livability for the people who otherwise really appreciate the opportunities to live in a way that they might not otherwise be able to achieve. A short summation of what we learned. (applause)

CHRISTINE: It will be interesting to hear Jerry Belson, who's going to be our last speaker, whom I first got to know as a lawyer at UJA, when he was representing developers, who were really construction contractors whom UDC turned into developers. And Jerry ended up, I guess, cleaning up a lot of messes, and built a management company, and is still involved in the management of a lot of UJA/UDC housing, so I think that he will be able to comment thoughtfully on the students' observations. We have with us today as panelists, two people, Linda Meyers and Bob Litke, both of whom began their careers at UDC as program people, Bob in the New York office and Linda upstate. You heard last night that UDC organized itself so that it had an upstate presence. As Steve Lefkowitz said last night, for political and physical planning reasons real

estate development is a very local business, and it needs a local presence. Linda started in Rochester and then moved downstate, and then went on to finding a career in commercial real estate. Bob Litke began his career in the New York office and went on to run the Roosevelt Island project throughout the heart of its development process. So I'm going to ask Bob to speak first and then Linda, to speak about the processes of land acquisition, project planning, local politics, and working with architects. Then we have Gene Norman to my right, who is an architect and has had a distinguished career, post UDC at HUDC and the City of New York, who will talk about the architectural process.

ROBERT LITKE: Thank you Christine. It would have been very nice if I had in fact started my career at UDC; I'd be a lot younger than I am! And I'm really sorry, with the airline system working against me, that I couldn't manage to arrive in time to attend last night's session. Between Ted and Christine, they covered a lot of things that I might have said. Let me say that I was the 6th person to join the Urban Development Corporation back in 1968, and when I left in 1975, I was the last of the original Mohicans. So I managed to go through an awful lot from the beginning, through the crisis days. We had an enormous array of power, and that power was, in my opinion, never abused. As Christine mentioned, we could override zoning. We used the NY State building code. We had the ability to hire and organize design, construction and financing. When we started the organization, Ed Logue, Steven Lefkowitz, a couple of other people and myself, we used to fly by helicopter all over the state. And I can remember at least two occasions landing with a helicopter on the front lawn of the Utica City Hall, and in some other small towns, and they would run out and say, what are you going to do for us? We need your help. We never said we'll do whatever we please. We always worked with the local leaders, with the community. If anybody ever set a standard for community planning and working with the communities, I have to say, Ed Logue and UDC did it. We never, never abused those powers. I have to mention the fact that in the five years of actually working, we built 33,000 housing units all over this State. We made lots of mistakes, but we did more good things than the mistakes, and there was never a scandal. We lost money. We went bankrupt, but that's common nowadays. So, we just set the standard, but we did everything right and there was never a scandal involved in the UDC. I'll make that point.

As Christine said, we organized around the state and as we got busy, we began to set up local offices. When I first started, I was flying all over the state with Ed Logue, and then I was working all of the Hudson Valley. And when it got busy, I worked New York City, and when it got busy, they isolated me on Roosevelt Island. So, the bigger the agency got, the smaller Litke's power became, and I ended up as the czar of Roosevelt Island, subject always to the king, who was Ed Logue, and his design standards. And I have to tell you, just to give you a sense of how things worked, when we were developing Island House (some of you who are familiar with Roosevelt Island will remember Island House) it was located right around a huge tree that was in the way in the courtyard. When Ed saw that tree he said, save it, regardless of cost. I will not embarrass his memory by telling anybody how much it cost because I never told him, but it cost a lot of money and it was well worth it. Let me talk a little bit about the legacy of UDC and Roosevelt Island. Let me step back a little bit. We began negotiating with the Lindsay administration early in 1968 to do business in New York City, and in those days, of course, turf was everything. It would have been an admission of failure for the New York City development entities to acknowledge that UDC

could come in and do things and make things happen, which would suggest that the City was not capable of doing that. So we negotiated for well over a year before we finally came to a deal. The crown jewel that Ed Logue wanted more than anything, of course, was to be able to redevelop Welfare Island, which we now know as Roosevelt Island. So eventually we got to the point where Ed called a meeting of the powers that be, and we convened it at 5 o'clock at 666 Fifth Avenue, and no one was allowed to leave, not for coffee, not for food, only for the restroom, until we cut a deal. We completed our negotiations at 2 o'clock in the morning, and then went out for breakfast.

Those negotiations resulted in UDC entering into a contract to develop Roosevelt Island, and entering into an agreement to develop housing in Coney Island and in the Bronx, the dregs of the New York City system, the neighborhoods where no one could do business. Those neighborhoods were so fractious racially that it was virtually impossible. But in three years, we built several thousand housing units in Coney Island and in the Bronx, and we avoided all kinds of ethnic war. Somehow we managed to show that if you have the ability to move forward, and you are getting people what they desperately need, you could make it work, and that's what we did.

Let me run through a few of the things we were able to accomplish on Roosevelt Island from 1969 when we started, through, let's say 1975, when I was given my walking papers. (I made notes here, on that extended airplane flight I had.) In terms of Eastwood, and Jerry Belsen knows this very well, we were the first housing developers to agree on a panelized poured-in-place concrete structure - which incidentally went into bonding company and was two years behind in construction, but that's a detail. You all know we built an aerial tramway and we connected the subway from New York City to Roosevelt Island. We created what was called a vacuumatic refuse collection system. You throw your garbage down a chute; it's carried underground by air pressure (vacuum) to a central collection point behind the Roosevelt Island garage where it's compacted and picked up by City of New York sanitation trucks. That saved the City one million dollars a year in sanitation pick-up costs, and it took us two years to negotiate that. We copied the idea from Disney World, and it worked, and the sad part is it's never been done again, which always makes me wonder why creative things aren't replicated? We centralized parking. We didn't want cars all over Roosevelt Island so we made a very narrow, quiet, sort of angular street, and we decided to collect all the parking in a humungous garage at the entrance to Roosevelt Island. Well then we had to figure out, what do you do with the people? So, we created an electric bus system. I'm not sure how many years the batteries on those buses lasted (and the cords we had were very, very flexible to extend the battery connection!) but they worked for many years and they were quiet and pollution free. Cannot say what's happening on the Island anymore. I haven't been there in about ten years.

AUDIENCE: They're not there.

ROBERT: They're not there. The batteries wore out or the extension cords broke! Back in the late '60's, early '70's, the bridge from Queens to Roosevelt Island was an open/closed bridge to allow boats to go through. From the day it was built, it would always open and close, when a little boat, a little sail boat would come down that side of the East River. No one in New York City ever thought about going to the Coast Guard and negotiating to close the bridge. We did. We went

to the Coast Guard. We finally got them to acknowledge that there was no reason to open that bridge since the other channel was quite adequate. We got the City to close the bridge. The poor bridge tender got fired. And we painted the bridge purple. Another innovation that no one had ever tried before. I think it's still painted some color, I would hope. I've been trying to sell that idea in Houston now for fourteen years, and they did in fact finally paint some highway elevated columns bright red. It's the ugliest thing you ever saw!

On Roosevelt Island, because of Ed Logue's concept of schools and neighborhoods, we distributed the schools. We built little schools in housing units and we were planning to run a school system from K through 8 or 9 I guess. Then when the kids got old enough and strong enough to defend themselves, they would go off to the Island, to local high schools. It was very successful. We worked out a very good arrangement with the New York City school system and the local unions and the teachers, and we hired a school superintendent for Roosevelt Island in concert with the teacher's union and the district. We hired somebody from a small town in Maine or Vermont, thinking that Roosevelt Island was a small town, and a small town superintendent would do great things. In a year we discovered he was petrified. Couldn't beat the bureaucracy. It was a disaster. They went ahead and found us a district principal who was brilliant, a schemer. She would find a school that was being closed; she would call me up and say, do you have a truck, I can pick up a load of desks. And I would call Jerry or one of the contractors on the Island and say I need a truck. We got a truck and we got the schools opened and they worked. I don't know if they're still there and working. (Audience response unintelligible) They're still there and working. They're still there and working and I hope some of the kids turned out to be brilliant scholars. I don't know that. (I'm being rushed to get finished; I know it; I can feel the vibrations!)

We have of course, as most people know, created an opportunity for ground floor retail throughout the community, and one of the things we did of which I was very proud, we negotiated a supermarket lease on Roosevelt Island before we even had tenants. We made a very good deal in order to attract it, but the idea was to help market the housing on the Island. We had that supermarket. I guess it's still there. Hopefully they've made some money, and the Island worked very, very well. We had community. We specialized in doing business with the community. We were very keen on preservation. We had the oldest farmhouse in New York City on Roosevelt Island, and we fixed that up. And I can tell you there was a very dignified Italian preservationist by the name of Giorgio Cavaglieri who worked on that and the church. And he was terrified of Ed Logue. Every time Ed came to the Island to look at Giorgio's work, Giorgio would stand behind me so I could protect him. But we got great work out of everybody on that Island, and it was a wonderful six or seven or eight years, and I can remember every detail. I go home sometimes at night, and I can't think of my wife's name, but I remember everything about UDC. Thank you. (applause)

CRISTINE: Linda Myers is going to be our next speaker.

LINDA: Hi. I came to UDC from the City of New York where I was working on the so-called Vest Pocket Housing Program. We were working on those sites in Coney Island and Twin Parks which you will hear about again and again as being very hard, difficult sites, taken in order to get Welfare Island. But we really thought in the City that we were doing some good by trying to pick

sites that required no relocation of existing residents, and also, would produce smaller scale developments rather than the more massive public housing type that had been coming into disfavor. I spent some time in New York City with Bob, found out he was a poet, and went to Rochester. The first thing I worked on in Rochester was a museum show of renderings and models and kind of déjà-vu all over again. The local Rochester art critic cornered me and wanted to know why UDC was not planning a restaurant on the river in one of the housing developments. I really didn't have a good answer, but as you have seen, they certainly went forward with a lot of mixed-use space for non-residential uses too. I was assigned the elderly housing program in the City of Rochester. We worked very closely with the City. I think they may have even been in the same building. I can't quite remember, but it was with their total cooperation. We also did a number of suburban projects with the cooperation of the outlying towns. My major architectural recollection there is that one of the prominent young New York architects hired arrived in a chauffeured limousine for a community meeting, and I don't think the president of Xerox had a chauffeured car. So there was a big to-do about that, and that's all I remember of that meeting.

The elderly housing program for 25 units went pretty smoothly. The fast track really worked. We built at higher density than the surrounding area. We went through the design and construction process faster. We certainly had some problems because we priced the construction at schematic stage, so we were frequently a little off the mark. Architect selection was a big issue with the locals, and I think we probably had our biggest hassles with the Mayor or community development director who wanted the 'favorite son' as the architect. Or they sometimes reached out for big names. I remember the City of Rochester eventually got Moshe Safdie assigned to a project. I don't think it ever got built, but I remember going again and again to Ted Liebman and to Ed Logue, and being turned down when reporting the name of someone whose name came from the local officials. The fastest-built housing project there was an exception to that rule. There was a developer who had a squat round building which he built all over that county regardless of the site, and it went up the fastest, and it is still fat and squat. The 2500 units was maybe a little overly optimistic. The market didn't quite meet the need. By the time the units were built and the Section 236 rents were applied, you had a minimum income and a maximum income which left a fairly narrow band of eligibility. So the units did not rent up as fast as we had anticipated when the program got started.

I think that the esprit and camaraderie was unique, as Ted has alluded to, but it also was a time of Women's Lib, and there was a lot of hardship, I think, among the women staff people on some of the front lines. We found out we were earning less than the men in comparable positions. I had to go in the back door to have lunch with one of the contractor/developers working with me on my projects when we met at his club. I was not offered a promotion. I didn't even know I was being considered because they knew I was married and would never move, and when I found that out of course I threw a fit, and had to accept the next offer that was forthcoming. And then I moved, I took the offer and moved downstate, and worked on projects in Rockland and Orange Counties, one of which was largely built out by then and was beginning to run into occupancy and management problems.

I noticed that one of the boards in the exhibition shows the Haverstraw community. Now Haverstraw is very pretty, but the boards don't really tell you that the two- and three-bedroom



units originally proposed by UDC and supposedly in all our programs were pulled out of the program at the community's urging. We ended up with all one-bedroom units, a largely elderly project. We kept trying for more agreements in that part of the State, and I never got to work on the Nine Towns, thank heaven, in Westchester. I arrived after that was pretty much completed, but I did work long and hard on Long Island.

I found you had a discussion last night that made the same point that I want to make today. With a memorandum of understanding, with unbelievable community support for a hundred and half units or so, the Long Island newspaper riled up opposition, some very fearful people came out in opposition. We had to have town approval and the town of Babylon voted us down. The need was there. The need is there today. All over Long Island, where I've lived for 25 years, every place we tried to get a memorandum of understanding and were turned down because of the fear of "they're gonna move in from New York City", everywhere today they're still trying to get housing, and now of course there aren't the same types of subsidies available. The legacy, though, of UDC on Long Island is having bankrolled an umbrella organization, the SCDC, Suffolk Community Development Corporation, then also expanded to Nassau County, and they did a lot of that small stuff that was talked about last night: maybe six houses in a row that they could acquire, a little vacant site here and there, Section 8 (and I think they've become one of the largest users of Section 8). More recently the successor organizations that have been tapping into the farms, home loans and the SBA loans. There's been some moderate success on Long Island, but nowhere near meeting the need. We did some feasibility studies for an aquarium in Greenport, and I remember without any consultants' help, in a week or two, did a revitalization plan for downtown Roosevelt, which is still a tough, tough problem; nothing ever happened there. So the same issues still are around us. The experience, the friendships, the networks, were and are great. I've never met or exceeded the type of camaraderie and similar values among colleagues. And working for Ed Logue really put me into a great state. You had to be so prepared. You had to use visuals. You had to know the price of the land per acre, per square foot, per square inch. That type of preparation I took with me and it has helped me through the last thirty years, and hopefully the future, and I think it did help the building of very much needed housing communities. That's it. (applause).

CHRISTINE: Bob and Linda talked a bit about how they went about planning housing. Eugene was with Design and Construction. UDC had an organization, it had the regional offices, one of which was in New York City, staffed by the people who worked with the community, worked on land acquisition, at least where the sites were going to be, worked on the program. It also worked with HUD to secure the subsidies that were necessary. Then it had the architectural department headed by Ted Liebman, who selected the architects, worked-in the development of the architecture program with the housing-unit development program. And there was the design and construction department that oversaw the development of the plans themselves and the construction of the units. Gene is going to tell us about how that worked.

EUGENE NORMAN: It was all magic. I came to UDC in 1972, and prior to that, I'd had experience for about 14 years working in offices here in New York City, primarily with the old Vorhees firm, at 2 Park Avenue. I also worked for Victor Gruen & Associates in their New York office and did shopping centers and the New York Center over at the railroad station. And my co-workers at the

time were Beyer, Blinder and Belle. It's funny how there must be two dozen people in your life and they keep recycling through from time to time! I also did a short stint at the Port Authority. (This is all going somewhere, by the way; it's not just reading my resume.) I also did a short stint at the Port Authority and worked on their in-house design team that did Newark Airport. And then finally, I spent some time with a small minority-owned architectural firm, working on planning and some housing in Newark, New Jersey, that followed the riots that some mention was made about last night. And also some public housing up in Stamford, Connecticut. So all of that is to say, that I arrived at UDC in '72 with about 14 years worth of varied experience, and that was true for most of the architects in the design and construction department.

Design and construction was a bi-chambered organization. There was a group of architects and then there was a group of construction people, all headed by Herb Tessler. And when I was interviewed by Herb, following an interview by his deputy Carl Pinero, it became clear that my particular background probably helped me get into that department. Herb and Carl both had worked at the Port Authority around the same time I was there, but they were working on the World Trade Center. They both had connections with Pratt, and I had attended Pratt, so that was a plus for me, and lo and behold, I get hired into the architectural section.

The architectural section was divided into three teams, and each team consisted of about five architects. There was a team that handled all of the New York City projects. Mel Eisenberg was the team leader for that group. There was a team that handled Buffalo/Rochester, those two regions of the state. Bob Gitlin was the team leader for that group. And then there was the team that I was assigned to and eventually led. Frank LaSusa was the team leader when I was hired. He left to go to, I think, Welton-Beckett shortly after I got there. So I became the team leader, and our responsibility was for the rest of the state. Now that sounds like a big deal, and in certain ways it really was. We did projects in Westchester County, Yonkers, where we did some high-rise projects. One of them was a replication of the project that Sert Jackson's office did on Roosevelt Island, which was called Riverview 2 up in Yonkers. We also did a lot of low-rise projects, and that was my first experience with low-rise construction, in various parts of the mid-Hudson region, up around Syracuse and in the Albany area. I think in total our team was probably involved with close to 8000 dwelling units, plus a library in Newburgh and a couple of other civic projects. We also got involved with flood control, or flood rebuilding, after a hurricane had swept through western New York. We were all flown up there to help put that place back together again.

When we got involved in a project, it had already gone through a certain gestation period. You heard Linda and Bob talk about the regional offices, and we worked very closely with the regional offices. They were the ones that basically negotiated arrangements with the local municipalities, and created memoranda of understanding with those groups. For local townspeople they created citizens' advisory committees, so there was participation of local residents almost from the beginning. And they very often selected the architect, or at least made recommendations for the architect to work on the project. The final recommendation or final acceptance of the architects, I think, came from Ted's office, though I can remember visiting architects' offices and prowling around and saying, yeah they look like they know what they're doing, or they don't, and writing a little memo back to Ted or Herb Tessler, my boss, saying use them or don't use them. So it was a shared kind of thing. One of the things I noted almost immediately when I walked into UDC, is that

there seemed to be a tendency for Ed Logue to assign the same task to many people, and he kind of rose to the idea of seeing people argue over how to get something done. I didn't appreciate that in the beginning, but after a while and through the years I've come to understand that maybe that's not such a bad way to do things because you instill a kind of competitiveness and you generally get better ideas than having just one person, who's got a busy schedule of things to do, concentrate on that one item.

It was also the whole organizational attitude that I reacted to when I got there. This was a state agency (and everybody knows about government work, not bad for government work, you come in at 8:30, 9, have your coffee till 10, go out to lunch at 12, and then go home at 4:30, if you can sneak out). But that was not the case; that was definitely not the case at UDC. This was an organization in which everybody appeared and did act in a committed way about the mission. And the mission was to make sure that people who didn't have an opportunity to live a better life because of their physical environment, would get that opportunity. In very short order it spread to me and everybody else working with me and for me, and we didn't have any regard for the time of day or day of the week. I can remember going out in the field on a Sunday with construction people to take a look at a recent concrete pool, or to inspect some partition work that had gone up in the wrong place.

So it was this unbelievable attitude about getting the job done almost at any cost. All of that went along at a frantic pace. I have to also say, it seemed that our job was to produce units and somebody, somewhere was counting the number of units that were being produced and we had better make damn sure that the numbers looked good. And from time to time to make the numbers work we'd have to show construction starts. Some of them were real; some of them were not real. Sometimes we'd put an earth mover on a piece of property and say, OK, that's a construction start without having drawings, or a developer, or anybody else, but we knew that that's what was gonna happen, and that kind of charade worked.

I should say quickly that another item that we didn't have much control over was the selection of the developer or contractor. Many local contractors were christened as developers by UDC, and a deal was struck for them to do the project, and a fixed price was also part of that deal. And a lot of the local builders who became developers didn't really know how to do the kind of quality that we insisted upon. We'd review their drawings and see that the hardware, for instance, that they were trying to use was the flimsiest, cheapest thing that you could buy in the kind of tract housing mode. So we insisted that it be changed, as well as many other things. They would hit the roof because this affected their bottom line. The big profits that they thought they were gonna reap from working with the UDC and using their old antiquated ways of doing things started to vanish like the dew before the sun. So there was often this continuing fight between the architect that we hired, the developer who was using that architect, and us, in the middle, keeping things balanced and making sure we got the best product.

Everything was done on a fast-track basis for the most part. That meant that you had drawings in the very beginning on which the arrangements were signed off, which were a little bit better than back-of-napkin drawings. Sort of pre-schematics. Construction would begin and the architect would be virtually out in the field, drawing drawings about what should be where and how you do

it. It wasn't quite that loose but it certainly appeared that way. And the project would be built or started while the working drawings were being completed. That, again, led to a lot of problems, because as soon as the architects started doing the final working drawings and producing specifications, the fighting would start. Why do you want to use that? That's too expensive. Whoever heard of that? We don't want to use it. This is all coming from the local builder. But, however it was done, we managed to prevail and some good projects got built.

I want to quickly talk about some of the good things and then a couple of things that weren't so good. New technology was an important facet of what we were doing, so we were involved in a lot of modular buildings, boxes, as we called them. Some of them were pre-fab. Some of them were panel jobs. And it exposed me to a whole new technology that I had only read about, and didn't really know a lot about. The sites that we used for that kind of work, I can remember a project in Ossining, and a project in Grasslands at the Westchester County Medical Center, housing for their staff. The latter was a very flat site, easy to do; boxes came in, we linked them together on top of foundations that were dug, and bingo, it started to work and that was fine. Ossining was another matter. For whatever reason, the site that was chosen was a kind of a hilly, rocky location, as I remember it, and it was a deuce of a time pouring concrete, retaining walls and foundations and what-have-you, before the boxes could be put in place. But all of that is to say that UDC was willing to experiment with new technologies, and its too bad that more of that isn't still happening today.

Mention was made earlier about the Nine Towns project, and in a certain way, that was the handwriting on the wall for the demise of the UDC. Westchester County, as any county, is divided into townships, and the top office, Ed Logue, felt that it made sense to do 100 units of housing in each of the nine towns in Westchester. Sites were selected and sometimes they were sort of marginal. They didn't have water; they didn't have sewer connections. We would send out surveying teams to dig wells and poke around underground to see what the conditions were like, and we ended up with nine sites; maybe four of them were good and the others were just sort of marginal. The opposition to that approach started to spread rumors, very ugly rumors, quite frankly, about how this was an attempt by the fascistic Ed Logue to bring residents from Harlem up into places like Sommers and Bedford and some of the upper, fancy bedroom communities in Westchester County. And as with all of our projects there had to be a series of public hearings held. I can remember, though I wasn't there at the actual hearing, the very famous Bedford hearing where a crowd turned out and jeered and said all sorts of ugly things to the UDC staff including Ed Logue, who attended that meeting. In any event, we went ahead and bought the sites, hired architects, got ready to do the projects, and then it started to really fall apart. The local elected officials sort of ganged up and spoke to their counterparts in Albany, which resulted in the fact that the projects never got built. I can remember being involved with Ken McGlocklan, who was the real estate person, in selling back or selling off the sites that we had acquired.

UDC was an exciting place to be. It helped me see how government can function to do good. I came there with the desire to work on housing for working poor. I think I was able to accomplish a good deal of that. Along the way, I met a lot of good friends who still pop up from time to time in my life now. I was working with architects who were sort of on the cutting edge of design. Sometimes the designs weren't as livable once they were built, but clearly they were thoughtful,

innovative and exciting designs. So I feel very good that I had a chance to participate in that. I also worked on my very first historic preservation project, an old hotel in Duchman, New York, that was converted to - I mean Callem, New York - it was called Ducher House - that was converted into housing, and it was my first involvement in a historic, kind of preservation mode. Perhaps that led me in later years to end up in the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commissioner's Chair. So, in many ways, my life has been improved, benefited by having worked at UDC, and I'll always remember those years as being among the best. (applause)

(END OF TAPE)

CHRISTINE: I wasn't sure they became developers because more traditional developers in the New York real estate community wouldn't be developers of our projects, or whether the less experienced contractors were more malleable for UDC to work with. But in any event, Jerry represented them as lawyer, and I remember long arguments about various aspects of development and construction agreements with him on behalf of his clients, and I on behalf of UDC. And then he went on to specialize in housing management and I think actually does currently manage a UDC project, so amongst the people here today he probably has a fairly unique perspective since it spans from the early days right up to the present.

JEROME BELSON: Thanks Chris. I don't like to disagree with panelists. It's not the way to start, but I did disagree with Bob Litke, who's a great, wonderful buddy. Ed Logue was not a king, Ed was an emperor. There is a difference. One of the great successes of UDC in my opinion, as the prior speakers have mentioned, is the fact that the employees at UDC were never civil service. By legislation, they were outside of the civil service mechanisms. So that what you have there were two ingredients: competence and loyalty. And if those who were part of the UDC alumni reflect for a moment, they were very unusual people.

Now as Christine indicated, I held three different positions in the private sector. As an attorney I represented contractors, and by the sheerest coincidence I represented five of the first contractors at UDC. My legal office handled the first closing at UDC. So we had that aspect, where you're being given a project with an architect that you didn't select, with a price that you didn't create, with a number of units that you didn't dictate, with the specifications that you didn't set forth, and you're told, come in with a number. And you've gotta meet that number. You can change anything but the number of units and the distribution of the apartments.

Ed had one driving, several driving philosophies. Number one, he wanted architects who had never done public work. If you did public work, you couldn't talk to him. Don't talk about fencing. Don't talk about handling low-income people. Ed wanted architects who would bring a new design, a new philosophy, a new dream to these new towns and new units that he was creating. So that he didn't want what was done before. He also wanted to integrate fiscally the residents of the building so that as Steve Lefkowitz mentioned last night, he was great at accumulating Section 8 funds from the federal government, from whatever source. But Ed was a dreamer in the sense that he met with the HUD people and said this is what I'm going to do with this particular project, and I'm going to set aside 25% of the units for low-income. What do you think of that? And they said great. Ed then had it designed in, and all that I was left to do when

the buildings were finally made available to us for rental, is to bring in the 25% of the people. The only thing he didn't do was give me the income for having them pay rent. Every one of our jobs failed. We had no income. The residents were paying their subsidized portion, but the federal government didn't come along for eighteen months before they were able to give us the contract that would make up their portion of the rent. So that every, not almost, but every one of the developments that we had, was a failure fiscally from day one.

I had the first four Twin Parks jobs, and they were difficult because we were concerned with operating within the budget, and we just blew the budget. We just could never ever make it up, and it was a great dream to achieve, but it was hard to accomplish. Ed similarly, in his design of a building and his desire for what a particular development should include, included day care centers, included pre-kindergarten, which is great. He cleared it with the local city but again, there too, they never came up with the funds to finance the facility. So that in the first five or six developments that were built, we built-in these facilities with no mechanism to pay for their operation, and it was only later on that we were finally able to say, hold it, we want to change the plans. Unless you at UDC can deliver us a contract, we're not going to build it. So it was a difficult moment from that point of view. I want to indicate that in the dream that he had, because I don't want to ever denigrate the facts that Bob Litke and the others have indicated, UDC created 33,000 housing units. That took a huge amount of doing.

In the creation of it, because it had to be different, we had some operating problems. What were the operating problems? Well, in a development that had 440 apartments, in six buildings, one of the minor problems we had: no outdoor lighting fixtures. Zero. We had a public street that went through the center and during construction we went on site. The architect said, oh I thought about that. Because I designed overly large window panes for the living rooms, the spillover from the apartments should light the plaza. So I said, that's great, what do I do when they go to sleep? Nobody should be in the plaza at that point, you don't have to have light. So whereas we could have included outdoor lighting fixtures on the building at the time of construction for 20,000 dollars, I had to do it, six months after occupancy, after we had a series of assaults, for 220,000 dollars. The experience wasn't there. The desire to create something new and unique was wonderful. It didn't work out in practicality.

So that all in all, we were able to accomplish the dream, albeit the fact that the finances weren't there, and the best public interest of the legislature caused them to allocate 10-12 million dollars a year to make up the debt service on the bonds. Nevertheless, the 33,000 units did get built, and they still remain a legacy. And as a last note to Ed's memory, on August 31 the mortgage of the Eastwood development on Roosevelt Island, consisting of a thousand dwelling units, will be bought out from the state. They'll be given over 50 million dollars. It'll become a private development. Negotiations have been completed with the federal government. 870 residents will receive subsidy vouchers and Ed's dream of creating affordable housing will remain as a permanent monument to his entire philosophy. So in that sense, he was able to accomplish that which he always dreamed to accomplish. Thank you. (applause)

ROBERT LITKE: I have to append one comment to everything Jerry said. Notice he's the only representative from the private sector here. He's the only person who worries about details. We

bureaucrats have big ideas. The private sector worries about details.

CHRISTINE: We're supposed to have a question and answer session now, and the audience and the panelists are invited to ask questions as they would like. Do I see any questions from the floor?

AUDIENCE (Judith Berdy): The Chapel of the Good Shepherd on Roosevelt Island has given me a lot of experience talking. I'm Judy Berdy, President of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society. Mr. Norman, when you worked with Victor Gruen, did they come up with the East Island project, or was that before your time? That was the one to put 70,000 people in 20,000 housing units on Welfare Island.

EUGENE NORMAN: No, I never heard about that project when I was with the Gruen office. It may have been in the planning stage, but we just worked on shopping centers and Newark Gateway Center at the Penn Station in Newark, New Jersey.

AUDIENCE (Judith Berdy): Thank you. It's one of those projects that I found in the archives somewhere and I shuddered when I looked at it, to build a whole island on a platform. I must say that even if I have my criticisms and my problems as a tenant on Roosevelt Island, and as someone who studies the island, it is a wonderful place to live, as I said last night. It's like any community, and we complain because we really care about it as a community. If I were a typical Manhattan apartment dweller, all I would do would be to pay my rent, or pay my maintenance and not give a damn about the landlord, but you have about 10,000 people on Roosevelt Island who are pretty active and pretty vociferous because they really love their community. I want to tell you that our AVAC garbage collection system is still there, still vacuuming away the trash every day, and every year the sanitation department tries to cut the budget and every year we say no, and Mr. Belson is very happy about that because there's nowhere to put trash on Roosevelt Island if you didn't vacuum it away and compact it. We really were the first compacting community. The bridge to Queens still goes up and down because, as you said, they wanted to permanently close it, but it still lifts up every day. The mini-schools were closed down by the Board of Education about ten years ago and one large public school was built. Our mini-schools never had things like a big gym, cafeteria, auditorium, so we now have a big public school, and our mini-schools after 10 years of vacancy were converted to a series of specialized private schools. They're very successful; they've been renovated beautifully and they're serving a good purpose now. Our ground floor retail is a total failure. It's controlled by the State Agency, and RIOC, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, who can not seem to sign a lease for anything without torture and torment (right, Christine?) It's sad because our shopping is a horror on Roosevelt Island. I don't know why but I heard similar things about projects downtown on Chatham Square near the World Trade Center in Tribeca, which seem to have the same problems with retail. And I will tell you that Giorgio Cavaglieri, as you mentioned, did restore the Blackwell House and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, but he must be really scared of the ghost of Ed Logue because even now, many years later, he doesn't want to come back to the Island. And he's alive and well and about 95 years old. Mr. Litke, one thing, are you the person who negotiated with Goldwater & Coler Hospitals to allow physically handicapped patients to live in the new housing complexes?

ROBERT LITKE: Yes

AUDIENCE (Judith Berdy): That is one of the greatest accomplishments, the inclusion of about 50 accessible-for-disabled apartments in the Island complex. Eastwood was designed, and this is 1970, way before the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled residents. Every single building entrance has provided for disabled accessibility from day one, and it brought a whole population of people who would otherwise have been stuck in long-term care into our community, and it's way more than 50 apartments at this point because a lot of apartments have been able to be adapted. And it's something that the community just takes for granted. If someone is in any way disabled, it doesn't matter on Roosevelt Island; it doesn't matter if you're on a respirator, if you're on a ventilator, if you have an electric wheelchair, everyone gets around. And that's one thing I think should be one of your top stars - for integrating the two communities. Thank you. (applause)

CHRISTINE: Speaking of the integration of the communities, on Roosevelt Island the first 2000 units, I guess, were the original UDC development. Then about 4 years later, I think, another 1000 units were developed north of the first Northtown. And then Southtown, which was supposed to happen around the tramway, took a very long time, 10-15 years to develop. How are the residents of those newer communities, housing in Southtown, how do they relate to the people in the original Northtown communities?

AUDIENCE (Judith Berdy): We have 2000 units of the old folks like me, the people who have been there 30 years, 25 years, in the original buildings. We have 1000 units of buildings that were built in the late 1980's, that's called Manhattan Park, at the northern end of Northtown. Unfortunately, they built four buildings of "luxury housing" and one building of Section 8 housing, which was a total disaster because not only did the developer, under the old guidelines, isolate the low-income people in one building, he didn't even want to put a River Road address, where his luxury buildings are located, on the exterior of that building. He wanted that building to be on Main Street, completely stigmatizing these residents. 'You have a building, but you're not a part of us.' Needless to say, it didn't work out. His building is now 2-4 River Road. That's a low-income building that's had success in the 100 units of senior housing, and many problems in the low-income factor, probably because these people were really stigmatized. It really said that you're going into low-income housing. This never happened in Eastwood, Island House, or Westview (the original buildings).

We have every kind of housing in the world within these buildings, and we get along great. The Secretary General of the United Nations lived in Island House until he got a better house that came with his job. We have a lot of UN people, a lot of every kind of person in the world. On a typical day on Roosevelt Island everyone is out having a great time, and we don't think about these things. I get off the tram in Manhattan and I'm in lily white Upper East Side, 10021. I get off the tram on Roosevelt Island and the whole world is there, and that's the important thing about living on the Island. Our new buildings are called Southtown. The first two buildings which are about 300 units belonging to New York Cornell Weill Medical Center, and about 400 units belonging to Memorial Sloan Kettering Medical Center, are mainly occupied by researchers. Unfortunately these are young doctors and scientists who come for a year or two to really work hard at the hospitals, really study hard, and then go on with their studies, and they don't really



want to integrate into the community. So these two buildings are almost like dorms, and its sad, because very few of the residents have families that come into the community. The third building of Southtown is now being built with 150 luxury units, condominiums that started day 1 at \$222,000 for a studio and are now way over that, and a 3-bedroom unit is over a million dollars. So the real estate interests are really happy. Our last project is toward the northern end of the Island around the Octagon, which was the former lunatic asylum, the former Metropolitan Hospital, and which is being restored. Nine million dollars is being spent to restore the beautiful dome on top of the building, and two wings are being added. They will have 500 units of housing of which 100 will be "affordable". That developer worked very hard to get the 100 units of affordable housing, and though I don't think it's going to be as low in price as other "affordable" units, at least that developer is trying, and working with the community, and meeting the challenges of doing business on Roosevelt Island. Thank you.

LINDA: Judy, thanks for reminding us. The accessible units have been built throughout the state and are being well-occupied. I have a question based on the students' presentation of Marcus Garvey, where they showed patch-work deterioration, and I was wondering, Gene or maybe Jerry, is this, you think, a function of time or was the quality not as good as you had hoped for by changing the hardware?

EUGENE: I don't think it has to do with the design at all. I think it's probably a maintenance problem. Time and time again, we see that owners, for whatever reason, to make things happen, can't spend money on normal upkeep. So I would look there first. If money had been spent and the damage continues, then you can say there's a problem with the design. But maybe Jerry can enlighten us all on that.

JEROME: That wasn't my job so I can't. I would agree with you that that should be a normal maintenance circumstance.

SUSAN SAEGERT: Hi, I'm Susan Saegert, the professor of the students who did the marvelous research work on the Marcus Garvey and Roosevelt Island communities. Out of their work I have a question about what you would say to the present about how the social vision and the quality-of-life vision that UDC had, could actually be implemented in an ownership governance and management structure that would preserve it?

ROBERT: If I may be allowed to comment because I was thinking about that. The first thing you need is a visionary leader, and we had one in Ed Logue. I don't see any visionary leaders around the country anymore. You need someone who's a big risk taker. You must have someone who can instill social goals and social conscience. And we don't have that either. And you need a bureaucratic organization because everything large is bureaucratic by definition. But it has to be flexible and non-rigid, and doing away with the civil service system would be a breath of fresh air throughout the entire governmental structure of the United States.

EUGENE: I'd like to add to that. I agree with everything that Bob said, but I also think that there needs to be a will, and we don't seem to have a will today to take care of the working poor. I guess the capitalistic approach to home ownership has taken root so strongly that it's believed

that everyone can and should own their own home. I happen not to believe that because there are people who are not, in a certain way, able to own their own home, and they need to have housing, and good housing, and they need to have the social supports that go with it, and there just is no will to see that that happens.

CHRISTINE: I guess I would like to say though, that the City of New York has, I believe, redeveloped 400,000 units of housing in the last 15 years. I believe all of it is subsidized in one form or another. Either the rents are subsidized directly through Section 8 contracts or there other forms of government subsidies in terms of grants. So I don't think it's quite fair to say that we were the last outpost of caring about developing low-income housing.

AUDIENCE (Larry Goldman): Good morning. Hi Bob. I worked for UDC twice. My second stint was as Vice-President and then Executive Vice-President of Roosevelt Island. The first time I was Ed Logue's assistant. I walked in this morning on the discussion of social mix at Roosevelt Island and I have a footnote to that. In 1973, I was teaching urban studies at Princeton and working on a dissertation about a New-Town-In-Town in London, Thamesmead, and I got very interested in the subject of social mix in new towns. Then, 2/3rds of the way completed on my dissertation, I had this, what I considered then, unique opportunity to go to work for Ed Logue at UDC. So, 6 out of 9 chapters written, I put everything down and moved to Riverside Drive and went to work for Ed Logue.

The heading under which this following story should come is the Logue-ian tension between his idealism and his pragmatism. We've heard today about the mix on Roosevelt Island. So I arrived at 1345 Sixth Avenue (UDC's address), and thinking that probably on my first day I would be asked to make urban policy for the entire State of New York, rather he said, why don't you go read the chronological file and see what I'm up to. So I opened the file, and the first thing I came to, which was the most recent letter added that he had written, started out, Dear Sam, when is the goddamn nitpicking gonna stop? Sam Jackson, I think his name was, was the Assistant Secretary of HUD, and he had written Ed a letter, saying, complaining I think, that the subsidized housing on Roosevelt Island had the easterly view towards Queens, and that the un-subsidized housing, which of course itself was subsidized in its own way, had the view toward Manhattan, and he wanted to know as Assistant Secretary of HUD, why this could possibly be the case. And that was Ed's response, 'when is the goddamn nitpicking gonna stop?' And I'll tell you, I learned something about new communities not just in New York and London, but around the world. To my knowledge, there is not another new community anywhere, anywhere, with the kind of ambitious social engineering goals that Roosevelt Island had, and the kind of economic mix that Roosevelt Island had, so I'm with Litke, this was a visionary. (applause)

CHRISTINE: Our time is almost up. I think we have a minute left. Does anybody else have a question? I think we can all have a cup of coffee now.

TED: 15 minute break for a cup of coffee.