



## White Plains Beautification Foundation, Inc.

FOR RELEASE 9/3/19

CONTACT: Beth Wallach  
1-914-761-2234  
bethwallach@verizon.net  
[www.wpbf.org](http://www.wpbf.org)

### For Whom the Bells Toll

The bells of the Westchester County Carillon will be tolling for the 19<sup>th</sup> year, including the year of horror and devastation, September 11, 2001. The tolling will begin at 8:46 a.m., the time of the first attack at the World Trade Center's south tower. It will then toll at the exact time of the next three disasters. During the day of somber remembrance, tolling will continue.

When the White Plains Beautification Foundation (<https://www.wpbf.org>) conceived of the idea of adding the sound of music to its expanding landscaping projects 50 years ago, it could never have imagined that it would be tolling its bells each year in remembrance of such a tragic day, known to all simply as 9-11.

It began in May of 1969 during a study trip known as the Urban Design Odyssey, which WPBF spent a year planning. It urged interested community residents and planners to join them on a 23-day tour of new towns and post-war re-built cities in five northern European countries, meeting with mayors and city planners in Hannover, Germany; The Hague, Netherlands; Copenhagen, Denmark; Stockholm, Sweden; and Helsinki, Finland. President of WPBF at that time was Brian Wallach, and board member, the late Joe Curtis, Commissioner of White Plains Department of Recreation and Parks, was the tour leader

One of their discoveries was made in Amsterdam when they heard bells playing from the Royal Palace. To their surprise, they learned that the music was produced by a Schulmerich carillon made in the United States in Pennsylvania. A carillon is a set of stationary bells hung in a tower which plays music at regular intervals. The Schulmerich Company is the world's largest producer of carillons and bells. The Schulmerich Carillon, which today is an electronic device, has the equivalent of 111 bells.

The idea of having a carillon in downtown White Plains seemed like a great idea. As in Amsterdam, it would enhance the sense of community and bring cheer to all those within hearing distance. And so the plan evolved, and five years of fund-raising began. The cost was \$25,000. After searching for a place to install the

carillon, Westchester County, which had completed construction of the new courthouse, agreed to its installation in the top story, with stentors on the roof from where the sound emanates.

The carillon was dedicated November 22, 1974, with a short concert presented by John Klein, an eminent carrillonneur, on the console. WPBF extends an invitation to pianists and organists to contact them about giving it a try. (Call Beth at 761-2234.)

Fifty years later, the carillon continues enhancing the lives of the public as it emulates some of the great public squares one sees throughout Europe.

For whom do the bells toll? Never forget. All whose lives were so tragically lost that terrible September day, and for those who mourn. They toll for thee.

**About White Plains Beautification Foundation:** Incorporated in 1965, after its start in 1952 as a small committee, WPBF is a not-for-profit organization, whose many projects include extensive tree-planting, establishing 60-plus gardens, building two fountains, a summerhouse and gazebo. WPBF has also provided two street clocks and over 90 teakwood benches throughout city parks. It receives no government funding and relies solely on business and individual donations. It also provides water and maintenance of gardens through its Adopt-a-Park program, supported by individuals and commercial enterprises. Its structure consists of a board of directors and a group of associate volunteers. Those wishing to attend monthly meetings and learn more about becoming involved are most welcome. White Plains residency is not a requirement.

# # #