

INSIGHTS

35 YEARS OF LIVING IN THE "PROJECTS"

The mention of public housing to some people might evoke thoughts of large, poorly maintained, unsafe, crime ridden and crowded properties. We often hear news from the larger metropolitan areas of issues and events that occur in the "projects." This term itself may be perceived as pejorative and connote a negative image.

Some of the first public housing was developed in the late 1930's as a result of the federal government having enacted the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. Like so many post-depression programs, there was concern about eliminating poverty and improving citizens' lives through social programs such as this. The City of Batavia has its own "projects." In 1964 the City government had the wisdom to create a Public Housing Authority, which took on the challenge of planning and developing its own affordable housing. The City realized the value of accessing federal money available for programs such as ours. As with many newly proposed concepts there was resistance, fear of the unknown, and the "not in my backyard" attitude. (Does this seem at all familiar? It was not unlike today's controversies such as the proposals for development of wind power.)

Batavia's public housing consists of both family rental units and the more familiar 400 Towers property that serves the elderly population. The 400 Towers was the premier affordable housing opportunity for our community's elderly and disabled citizens. The apartment complex will soon mark its 35th Anniversary. On October 16, 1971 a dedication ceremony was held at the building located at 400 East Main Street in Batavia. City Officials, including many well-known names from the past, were in attendance. The late Msgr. Francis Schwartz was a member of the Authority's Board of Directors, and proudly led the contingent of dignitaries and officials that day.

At that time there was an extensive waiting list of seniors anxiously seeking an opportunity to move into the building. Not only was the property the first of its kind in the area, but at that time the only one. Since then there are several new kids on the block, and our community has seen many additional housing choices for its elderly residents. Demographics reveal large numbers of senior citizens, and there are projections for increasing numbers as the baby-boomers age and we live longer, healthier lives.

I am delighted to be associated with our City's first "project", and reflect on the many wonderful relationships and friendships which have resulted, and have benefited from and enjoyed the life stories and experiences our residents have shared. I often comment that it has been like having had hundreds of grandparents.

Our community should look proudly upon its own public housing properties as good neighbors, and should appreciate the valuable benefit being provided. As I myself grow closer to the age when I will be included in this demographic group, I am grateful knowing there are opportunities such as these.

Frances McNulty, Executive Director
BATAVIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

10/03/2006

Dedication

OF THE

400 Towers

400 EAST MAIN STREET
BATAVIA, NEW YORK

CITY OF BATAVIA

James C. Holvey, President City Council

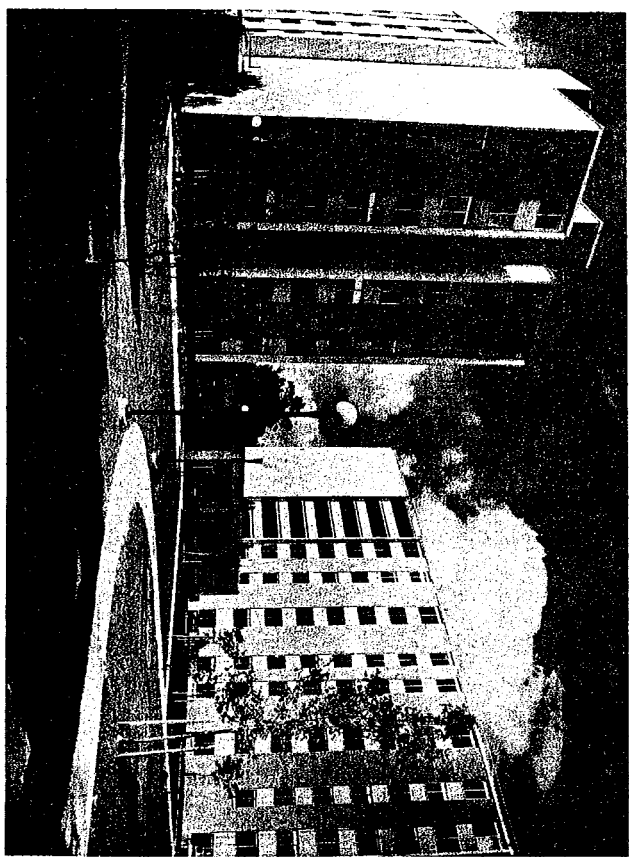
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Charles M. Schultz, Administrative Assistant



October sixteenth, nineteen hundred and seventy-one

DEDICATION PROGRAM

BATAVIA HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF BATAVIA, NEW YORK

NATIONAL ANTHEM

INVOCATION

REV. FRANCIS SCHWARTZ

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

REV. FRANCIS SCHWARTZ

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHORITY MEMBERS

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TURNKEY DEVELOPER FOR
400 TOWERS

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORP
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