Foreword

Long before we became the United States of America, one of this nation's earliest and most significant human rights struggles took place right here in Queens. The Flushing Remonstrance, dated December 27, 1657, was a written protest by English colonists on behalf of Quakers who were being persecuted by their Dutch rulers under Peter Stuyvesant, the governor of New Netherland.

This forerunner to the Bill of Rights is just one of the many firsts in Queens's rich history. Did you know that the United Nations was originally headquartered here or that the first commercial nursery opened in what is now Downtown Flushing? Long before there was a La Guardia Airport, thousands of people flocked to East Elmhurst in warm weather to enjoy a massive amusement complex, complete with beer halls and water rides. We have hosted two World's Fairs, one in 1939–40 and another in 1964–65, which drew millions of people from all over the world to our borough's famous Flushing Meadows–Corona Park.

In fact, Queens boasts miles of lush parkland, walking trails, playgrounds, and athletic fields. But it's also a dynamic place to conduct business, as witnessed by the many industrial and office complexes that dot our landscape, along with hospitals, colleges and universities, galleries and museums, and every kind of retail business you could hope to find. And its unique neighborhoods offer a welcome to immigrants and visitors from around the world.

In the most diverse county in the United States, everyone can find a neighborhood to call home. From Astoria to the Rockaways, people from every continent have brought their own cultures and made them part of the vibrant mix that is Queens. Now, with *The Neighborhoods of Queens*, residents and visitors alike can take an insightful, informative walk around America's most diverse borough.

In these intimate profiles, readers can find out more about the people of Queens, its many neighborhoods, and the qualities that make it unique: community solidarity, excellent housing, lots of open space and parks, every kind of cultural attraction, and world-class sporting events. With two of the world's busiest airports, we offer a haven for newcomers in the beloved borough we call "the Gateway to America."

Enjoy *The Neighborhoods of Queens* and the fascinating facts and figures that Claudia Gryvatz Copquin has gathered for your enjoyment. I hope that they inspire those of you who live here to venture out of your own neighborhood and

learn more about the areas around you. You will surely be happily surprised at your discoveries. And if you don't live in Queens, come and visit us! As I tell everyone, "Visit Queens and see the world."

Helen Marshall

President, Borough of Queens