

RICHARD GILDER WALK

East 72nd Street to Columbus Circle



This walk is dedicated to Richard “Dick” Gilder, Jr., who grew up playing in Central Park. His visionary philanthropy in support of the Park’s rescue was an expression of his love for New York City and his enduring confidence in the leadership of the Central Park Conservancy.

Dick viewed Central Park as one of the nation’s most inspiring innovations, a democratic space for all—and he was dedicated to building and supporting a management structure to oversee its restoration and care. In the 1970s, the Park was in a state of severe decline and lacked adequate oversight. To help remedy this, Dick co-founded the Central Park Community Fund. Led by a board composed of private citizens, the Community Fund sought to address the Park’s challenges with private funds and management expertise. That effort morphed into the founding of the Central Park Conservancy, the nonprofit organization that now manages, restores, and maintains Central Park in partnership with the City of New York.

Throughout the Conservancy’s 40-year history, Dick continued to be a visionary advisor and passionate supporter of the organization’s work. His vision to use the Conservancy’s management expertise as a role model for other City parks has led to the Conservancy’s helping and advising urban parks locally, nationally, and internationally.

About the Walk

Dick took this beautiful walk from his east-side home to his west-side office. Richard Gilder Walk features the following Park landmarks that highlight Dick’s 40-year involvement with Central Park and the Central Park Conservancy:

SHEEP MEADOW

In 1980, the iconic and world-renowned greensward was the first restoration and first Conservancy landscape maintenance project. It marked the beginning of Dick’s generous unrestricted gifts to Park operations.

HECKSCHER BALLFIELDS

In the early 1980s, the once-eroded ballfields were restored to healthy green lawn and play space by the Central Park Conservancy.

GREYSHOT ARCH, MERCHANTS’ GATE LANDSCAPE, AND THE MAINE MEMORIAL

In 1993, these southwest corner landmarks were included in “The Wonder of New York” campaign, which was launched by Dick when he issued a personal challenge grant to the Conservancy and the City of New York. That campaign also restored the Great Lawn and Turtle Pond, the North Meadow, and the west side landscapes.



Landscape restorations completed by the Central Park Conservancy along Gilder Walk:

SHEEP MEADOW



1979



Today

HECKSCHER BALLFIELDS



1980



Today



The Richard Gilder Walk and this brochure were generously funded by Jill and Lewis Bernard.

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