



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

“Levon Helm Memorial Boulevard” Legislation Passes Senate

JOHN J. BONACIC May 29, 2013

“LEVON HELM MEMORIAL BOULEVARD” LEGISLATION PASSES SENATE

The New York State Senate today passed a bill to create “Levon Helm Memorial Boulevard.” The legislation (S3935), is sponsored by State Senator John Bonacic. The legislation designates the New York State Route 375, the road which connects State Route 28 with the town of Woodstock, as the “Levon Helm Memorial Boulevard.”

Levon Helm was a Grammy Award winning American rock musician and actor who is most widely known as the drummer for the musical group “The Band.” He was a part of the production and recordings of songs such as “The Weight,” and “The Night They Drove Dixie Down.” Levon Helm also appeared as a successful actor in the films *Coal Miner’s Daughter* and *The Right Stuff*. Levon Helm was an active and valued member of the Woodstock community and was known for his Midnight Ramble concerts at his barn. The concerts drew people from around the world to experience an intimate concert setting with a major artist.

State Senator John Bonacic said, “I had the pleasure of knowing Levon a bit. He had The Right Stuff, that’s for sure. The day I got to ride with Levon in a car in a parade, was the first and only day my kids thought being a State Senator might actually be cool. His long-time road manager Butch Dener of New Paltz is a good friend of mine and Levon will always be missed throughout Ulster County and around the world.”

Helm was diagnosed with throat cancer in 1998. His cancer eventually went into remission, and Helm fought back to gradually regain his voice. He made a remarkable musical comeback in 2007 with his Grammy Award winning folk album “Dirt Farmer.” Sadly, Helm lost his battle with cancer on April 19, 2012, at the age of 71. The dedication of this highway is a tribute to his talent and his passion for the history and tradition of Woodstock.

“Now when people ramble up the road at midnight in Woodstock, they can take a load off and remember his legacy,” Senator Bonacic concluded.

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Attached (and linked) is a picture of Senator Bonacic with Levon Helm at the New Paltz Memorial Day parade in 2010:

<http://www.nysenate.gov/photos/2010/jun/02/vfw-post-8645-new-paltz-annual-memorial-day-parade>

Here is a link to a story on Levon Helm, Governor Pataki, and Senator Bonacic unveiling the plans for the construction of the Bethel Woods Performing Arts Center: <http://www.riverreporter.com/issues/00-08-31/woodstock.htm>