



Coalition to Save
Walt Whitman's House

99 Ryerson St.

April 15, 2019

**GROUPS RENEW CALLS TO LANDMARK THE LEAVES OF GRASS HOUSE
AS WALT WHITMAN'S 200th BIRTHDAY APPROACHES**

BROOKLYN - The Walt Whitman Initiative and dozens of allies in the Coalition to Save Walt Whitman's House are renewing their call to landmark the Leaves of Grass House in Brooklyn before Whitman's 200th birthday on May 31, 2019.

"What better way to honor Whitman's legacy as America's most famous poet amidst nationwide celebrations for the bicentennial of his birth?" said Karen Karbiener, head of the Walt Whitman Initiative. "Walt was a native son of New York and he spent most of his life in this state. Whitman's only remaining home in New York City deserves to be landmarked so that future generations can learn of his rise from the streets of Brooklyn."

Whitman lived in the house on Ryerson Street when he first published his epochal work, *Leaves of Grass*, in 1855. It is the only remaining Whitman residence in New York City - of more than 30 in Brooklyn and Manhattan - that has escaped the wrecking ball.

Hundreds of organizations and institutions nationwide are hosting events and programming to mark the Whitman Bicentennial. The Whitman 2019 Consortium, for example, recently [printed 30,000 copies of a new publication](#) listing scores of upcoming events ranging from poetry readings to musical performances to a beard contest. The publication highlights the broad impact of Whitman's poetry.

"We have continued to call on the Landmarks Preservation Commission to review additional information and designate the Leaves of Grass House as an individual city landmark," said Deirdre Lawrence of the Initiative. "The cultural significance of this building cannot be underestimated. It is one of the very few remaining touchstones left in New York City that connect us directly with Walt Whitman. We hope the new LPC leadership will help LPC steer a new course toward landmarking."

The Initiative and its Coalition partners were also quick to thank Council Speaker Corey Johnson, Council Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, and Council LGBTQ Caucus Chair Donald Dromm, as well as the entire LGBTQ Caucus for their written, public support of landmarking the former Whitman home.

"We are so grateful for the support of public officials here in New York City. As we approach Pride month, we hope Governor Andrew Cuomo will also consider naming the Leaves of Grass House a state landmark as a way to help celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots," said Eric Conrad of the Initiative. "This house is one of the earliest - and certainly one of the most symbolic - LGBTQ landmarks in all of New York."

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