

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

The Reminiscences of

Linda Mariano

## PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Linda Mariano conducted by Interviewer Kelly Carroll on February 15, 2011. This interview is part of the New York Preservation Archive Project's collection of individual oral histories.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The views expressed in this oral history interview do not necessarily reflect the views of the New York Preservation Archive Project.

Linda Mariano has lived in the Gowanus neighborhood in Brooklyn since the 1970s when she purchased a brownstone and started the long process of renovating and restoring it. She shares her experiences of how the area has changed over the years, the founding of Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus [FROGG], and the efforts to save The Green Building. She first became interested in preservation when a local building, The Mill, was sold and converted to condos. Since then, she's been a vocal neighborhood advocate, working towards naming the area a New York City historic district and listing the Gowanus Canal Corridor on the Nation Historic Register, and successfully working to have the Gowanus Canal named a superfund site.

Transcriptionist: Unknown

Session: 1

Interviewee: Linda Mariano

Location: Brooklyn, New York, NY

Interviewer: Kelly Carroll

Date: February 15, 2011

Q: Okay. We're recording. So I am Kelly Carroll and this is for Emily Evan's Oral History class at Columbia University's Historic Preservation Program. And I am here tonight, on February 15th, with Linda Mariano, and she is going to talk a little bit about Gowanus this evening. So to start off the interview, I wanted to ask, Linda, first can you tell me a little bit about when you first moved to Gowanus and when that was and what the neighborhood was like when you moved here?

Mariano: Joseph and I, and our daughter, Rachel was an infant, when we moved here in 1976. It was a very edgy, dodgy neighborhood. You couldn't leave your car on the street without it being vandalized like every other day *[laughs]*.

Q: Wow.

Mariano: There were lots of wild teenagers in the area who were I guess undirected. Not kids who stayed in school much, and got into trouble, and were, you know, hooligans. In fact, one evening, we had just finished building our gigantic planter and put it on the ledge in front of the house, we were having dinner, and I heard a big noise and ran outside and goodbye planter. The kids had knocked it down and ran away. But of course,

I ran after them *[laughs]*, and tracked them home, knocked on the door and said, “Hello, your kids, blah, blah, blah.” “Oh no they didn’t.” I said, “Oh, yes they did.” Anyway, that’s the way the neighborhood was at the time.

Cars were set on fire. The gas cap was always being stolen. The window was cracked. One morning I looked out at the car to see if it was still there and I remember looking at the car thinking, hmm, that’s in a funny position. Ran out and the car not only had they taken the tires, but they had taken the wheels on the side that was not facing the street, on the sidewalk side. So this is the way it was in 1976.

Q: 1976. And why did—

Mariano: Which doesn’t seem like a long time ago really, but—yeah. Then one fine day too there were—I was up in the studio painting and I happened to look out the front window, which faced President Street, it still faces President Street, and I could see on the rooftops of some of the buildings across the way there were all these men dressed in black with—how do you call those? Big guns?

Q: Like shotguns?

Mariano: Big guns. I don’t know what you call them. They were on the rooftop surveillance. And then I noticed also that there were lots of big limos on the block, which that’s a first, and they were all FBI agents.

Q: Oh, so maybe sniper rifles?

Mariano: Maybe. They had been surveilling the chop shop on the block, on President and Bond Street, and then just raided the joint. That made all the newspapers for a while and that was an exciting event here. That's what the neighborhood was like. We couldn't get a home improvement loan, because the area was redlined. It was that edgy, that dodgy, that the banks would not take a risk on giving us a loan for improving the house, which it desperately needed. There was no plumbing here, no heating, we had to have a new sewer line put in, or sewer connection. The kids who had called this their clubhouse—they had set fires in the house, so the floorboards were all broken up in the kitchen and some of the walls were battered in by baseball bats and that kind of thing. That's the way the neighborhood was.

Q: When did it start changing for the better do you think?

Mariano: You know, sometimes things happen so fast and maybe you're so busy engaged in what your own life is all about that sometimes things like that are very subtle. But I would say a good guesstimate would be—it took a while. It really did, it took a while. I would say about ten years at least, so '76 to '86. In '86, the owners of The Mill, which is a building across the street from house, was a big manufacturer of modern furniture, and one of the owners became ill and then it seemed they were downsizing. Then they finally sold the building to a developer from New Jersey. We said, "Aah, we don't want—aah,

what's going to happen here!" But the good news is that the developer was a sensible developer and did the right thing. Okay, it's converted into condos, but they did a beautiful restoration job. I mean, it doesn't—from the outside you would never know that it became something other than what it looks like it was. They've kept the brickwork in tact. The size of the window openings are the same as the original factory building had. They did build—how do you call those—penthouses on the roof, but you don't really—they're not visible from the street, which is a good thing. You can see them from a block away, but in a subtle way, so it's not too much to complain about really. And it's a very stable building as well. Many of the same people, original people who moved in there, are still there, which says a lot about New York and about this neighborhood too that it's remained stable.

Did I answer the question or am I forgetting the question, Kelly?

Q: Yeah. No, no. I just asked when did the neighborhood start getting better from basically when you moved in.

Mariano: Right. So then, our car was less demolished, I guess, by the '80s [*laughs*].

Q: Yes. And so you talk about this development that started coming into the neighborhood and this building was really sensitively adaptively reused.

Mariano: It was. Yes, indeed. One of the rare. One of the few I would say probably in all of Brooklyn or any other borough for that matter too. It's unusual and we're very lucky.

That I consider myself lucky about it.

Q: And what's the name of that building?

Mariano: The Mill.

Q: The Mill.

Mariano: It was originally, at least in 1886, it was called Planet Mills Jute Factory. They made rope. And we did hear, maybe urban legend, but some people have said that it may have been a brass foundry at one time. We've heard other people say that the doors for the Williamsburg Savings Bank were made there.

Q: Wow!

Mariano: I can't corroborate that in any way.

Q: Interesting. And so I guess so you've lived here for a long time, well, almost over forty years.

Mariano: Don't scare me, Kelly *[laughter]*.

Q: So more than a lot of people.

Mariano: Pioneers. Yes.

Q: Yes. Pioneer, yeah.

Mariano: Yes. I used to think nothing about going into dumpsters getting doors, doorknobs, all kinds of little accouterments because there was nothing in this house. This house had no windows, it had no doors. The window openings had been boarded up with just sheets of plywood. We put every window in this house ourselves. Every bloody window. We went to a mill in Brooklyn/Queens border, on Frost [Street] and Metropolitan Avenue, A&P Millwork [*phonetic*] as a matter of fact. That's where we bought the windows and they're still wooden-framed windows, which we've always had. Like I said, we've put every window into this house.

Q: And so when the neighborhood—obviously it's a very desirable place to live now and you are recognized as the preservation leader for this neighborhood.

Mariano: I hope so. That's good. That's a good thing. I'm proud of that.

Q: Yeah, you totally are. Yeah. I was wondering if you would like to tell me a little bit about how you came to own that name and how did it start.



Mariano: Well, in 2002—and I wish I still had the original letter that I received in the mail—January 2002, that’s about the approximate time that I received a letter from a developer who had these big plans to tear down 460 Union Street, which is a Civil War-era building, and beautiful to this day. I’m giving away the end of the story *[laughter]*.

Q: You’re just making the story more juicy.

Mariano: The plan was to tear down the building and put up this piece of garbage condo out of cheap, old materials, you know, you can’t fool me. I don’t care what your plans are, I know it’s going to not be real. I said, oh, no. No, no, no, no. Not going to let this happen. I really went a little bananas and I went door-to-door with petitions, asking people to sign petitions to save 460 Union Street. I went around also and I made maps of the neighborhood, because the developer claimed that there was a lot of vacant space underutilized and nobody lives here and dah, dah, dah, dah. The plan was for the developer to go to the [New York City] Board of Standards and Appeals and ask for a variance to tear down the building.

At that point in time, I had talked to enough people in the neighborhood, the Community Board, Bette Stoltz from South Brooklyn Community Development Corp. and others who had a little more clout, so we faced this all together, the citizen and people from various organizations in the neighborhood. And we would go—every three to four months, at the Board of Standards and Appeals, there was a hearing about 460 Union Street, and we

stood our ground, we defended the five points that the developer would have to make in order to get the variance cleared by the Board of Standards and Appeals. We made such a good case for ourselves that after two bloody years of every three, four months giving oral testimony and written testimony at the Board of Standards and Appeals, on February 3, 2004, Board of Standards and Appeals denied the application for the variance for the building to be torn down. This was a total victory for this community and it also shows the power and the strength that ordinary citizens can have when they fight. There is no other way to say it, it's a fight. It's a fight for how you feel about where you live, and that's all I'm trying to do.

Q: Well, I think you're doing an awesome job.

Mariano: I hope so. I feel I am and when you feel that, and you've had that giant victory, it helps to push you in that direction again, and again, and again, because there is always a battle for Brooklyn. It's just on every front, on every doorstep, on every block somebody is trying to take away a piece of your heritage, of your culture, of your history. It's strange to me that this is the way our culture and our society has come to that point. Why, I have no idea why. I think it's greed. Power corrupts, there is no other way to say it. Power definitely corrupts. And when developers and politicians—and god knows what drives them, I have no idea what that driving force is, for that kind of need for that. It's destructive. It's totally destructive. I guess—I'm imagining that they don't see how they are destroying or trying to decimate where we live. We're ordinary citizens, minding our own business, trying to live in a safe and civilized and beautiful—and with the wealth of

the building stock that we have here, you can't even begin to replace because we don't even have that kind of craftsmanship anymore. So why would you take that away, I don't know. This is a bigger question that maybe somebody else can answer, but I don't have the answers for that one.

Q: Yeah. What is the building used for? So you won. The building got saved.

Mariano: Yes, the building got saved. I'm quite proud of that. The building now is used as an event space. It is a very, very busy place. It's called The Green Building. It's painted—first it was kind of like an army green, a dark greenish gray colored building. Now it's a little bit lighter colored green. And the people who are leasing the building—I'm not sure if they're leasing or they're the actual owners of the building—I'm not even interested in who owns it at this point in time—just that clearly it is saved, it is being reused, it's revitalized, it's a statement. It's symbol, also, of the power of the community, the will of the community. I've been to a wedding there. They have big Halloween parties. They have events. They have art exhibits. It's a gallery sometimes. It's all kinds of ordinary events anybody would—you know, weddings, bah mitzvahs, whatever they do.

Q: I know that you are one of the founders of FROGG, which is the Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus.

Mariano: Yes.

Q: So where did that come into play with the struggle over the building?

Mariano: Well, we would meet in very ad hoc fashion. We would meet at somebody's office, at somebody else's kitchen table. It happened we were at my friend Margaret's in her loft on Nevins [Street], between Union and Sackett Street, and a bunch of us who were the diehards, the pushers, the people who went the Board of Standards and Appeals to give testimony, we would gather there because there were always other issues. It wasn't just the Green Building. It wasn't just 460 Union Street. It came down the road there was the Toll Brothers—how should we call it—the Toll Brothers went to [New York City Department of] City Planning to ask for a spot rezoning along the Gowanus Canal for their mega development. Many of us participated in what DEC [New York State Department of Environmental Conservation] called Team USA, which was called the Gowanus Stakeholders. And we would meet about the condition of the water quality of the Gowanus Canal, and that was on a very regular basis. That was like once a month I think. It was often, maybe not once a month, but every three, four months. It was also a fiasco and a waste of city money, because I think the last meeting after two or three years was exactly the same as the first meeting. I don't know.

And DEC still takes the same stance. They don't want to put any money into helping the quality of the water of the Gowanus Canal, it's as simple as that. And thank goodness the feds stepped in, in 2008, and nominated Gowanus Canal to the National Priorities List for

a toxic waterway. And then in March of 2010, after the FROGG's campaign—we had the biggest write-in campaign of any Superfund site in the entire USA.

Q: Wow.

Mariano: Yeah. This was not easy. This was hard work.

Q: Yeah. Tell me about it.

Mariano: It was another battle fought and a victory for this community.

Q: Yeah. Can you tell me more about that?

Mariano: Yes. After the Gowanus Canal was nominated for the Superfund, we gathered our wits about us and we had to do everything really in a hurry, because there was a time limit, as I recall. I'm not sure if it was thirty or sixty days for the write-in campaign. This is like a requirement that the feds stick on there. And that is—you can take either side of the fence. You can be pro Superfund or against Superfund. We got together in a hurry and we—yes, a young gal that I know, Jean Divine [*phonetic*] and her roommate Anna, who's last name escapes me right now, we were sitting with them. They came to a FROGG meeting on Smith Street and we talked about having a write-in campaign and we needed a logo, and Jean said, "I'll do it." She's a graphic artist. She works in—she

designs children clothing for one of those big clothing companies and her roommate, I think, teaches art, Anna.

So Jean left that night and she said she'll work it out with Anna, a logo. Well, they came up with the best logo ever and totally friendly. It was a whale spouting water in a heart shape, the heart shape was made of little dots, and then it said, Super Fund Gowanus. That became our mantra and our logo, our motif, and we had postcards printed that we could give to people that was addressed to the feds in Washington. And on the back, people would have a place for a comment and their name and address and blah, blah, blah, because it had to be name and address. They wouldn't accept it if it was anonymous.

We campaigned for this. We made posters. The posters were in every window in the area and I have all those remnants. I have all of those wonderful materials in my little archives. We had buttons with Superfund Gowanus and we did it. We did it in record-breaking time and the largest write-in campaign ever in the United States. And documents, I mean, I must have sent in I don't know how many documents to the feds and people also, other people of course, sent in written testimony and documents, etc., supporting Superfund for Gowanus. Yeah. So it is happening. It is happening.

This is truly a gift. This is a gift considering the fact that this is the Twenty-First Century. We have a canal in our backyard that is sick that needs to be remediated. That needs to be made well again. And the team from the Federal EPA [Environmental

Protection Agency] are some of the most responsible—how do you call it when people work for the government?

Q: Bureaucrats?

Mariano: Bureaucrats you have ever met. It's hard to even believe that they could be in that category, because they care so. They have given this community an enormous amount of their own time to come, talk, and explain and to do. They have also done a lot of their research and science—data in record-breaking time. It's phenomenal and these people they care. They care. It's as simple as that. It's a blessing. They are a gift to this neighborhood. There is just no other way to say it. Yeah.

It's like where we had been abandoned, we're now being rescued. It's really wonderful. A lot of us, save the FROGGS, are participating on—the feds have what's called a CAG, Community Advisory Group. And everybody in the community is welcome to participate to be part some of the committee. There's a water quality committee, there's an archeology component to this, that is awesome. I'm on that committee and no other committee and you can't take that away from me *[laughs]*. I'm hoping there will be some eventual archeological finds here if possible. I just hope so. I hope so. Yeah.

Q: Yeah. So between the Superfund designation and you've saved 460 Union Street—

Mariano: Yes.

Q: —what other preservation like issues have been going on here? Like has there been other buildings that were like 460 Union?

Mariano: Well, yes. But I didn't have—I was active, but not as active as I needed to as some others in the neighborhood.

Q: Just careful of the camera.

Mariano: Oh, I forgot about that camera. Oh, my god.

Q: No, it's okay.

Mariano: What a freak I am [*laughter*]. So, I'm sorry, it was a complete accident.

Q: No. It's fine.

Mariano: Oh, my word.

Q: It's still working.

Mariano: There was 330—Like so?



Q: I think that's fine, let me sure the microphone is sticking up.

Mariano: Oh, you know what, before I wander off to 333 Carroll Street, there was the Toll Brothers situation, and that was also a battle. Because after discovering—well, you know, we all screamed that week that the Blades Foreman Lumber Company building came down, was demolished by Toll Brothers and Philips Family, at the bottom of Second Street at the Canal's edge. The Blade Foreman Lumber Company building was a poured concrete building, as is the Coignet Building [New York and Long Island Coignet Stone Company Building]. That's what it was nominated for because of the way the building was formed. We screamed and yelled, but of course, it was too late, because they did it Christmas week when everybody is not home. The [New York City] Landmarks Preservation [Commission] not home. I don't want to say anything about the Regency. I'm not going to go there.

Q: Okay. No, that's fine.

Mariano: There was nobody to protect this building and it's gone. It's gone. And then Toll Brothers, after Superfund designation for the canal, abandoned that site and left town. So yeah. This is—yeah. But there were years of petitioning and going back and forth to City Planning because they had asked for a variance for spot rezoning and the city was willing to give them that. They got what they wanted, piecemeal, and then they tore the building down and then they left town. And took one of—this is an area, this is a community, a neighborhood, where there are very few landmarks and so it is very painful

when one of those disappears. That's all I can say about that. I'm thinking that might be a good spot for an archeological dig at this point in time. You know, I'd like to see something good come from that vacant land now. Yeah.

Also, there was Washington Park Wall, which was the original home of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and that is, was, on Third Avenue between First and Third Streets, and that was a battle that I tried to work with. I kind of called every baseball nut in the country via e-mail and everybody, of course, had something to say about it, but nobody did anything about it. But finally, the good news about that wall, ConEd [Con Edison] owns that land now and the fortunate part of that is that one of the community liaisons from ConEd then happened to be a baseball nut. So part of it still stands. Some of it is gone. Half of it is gone to a parking lot, but—yeah. But I think they need to put up some kind of commemorative plaque or something on that building, because a lot of people don't know that it was once the baseball—Brooklyn Dodger's stadium wall.

Q: And then you were talking about 333.

Mariano: 333 Carroll Street, between Hoyt and Bond, was an old—it was called, at least in 1886, it was Carroll Park Baptist Sabbath School. A developer bought the building and thought he could put three more stories on top of the building by saying that he didn't have floor area ratio in the basement, which was a bit of a fib because, you know, it wasn't true. But he did go ahead and build three more stories on top of the building, and

of course I think that gathered a lot of support from a lot of the architects in the neighborhood and community, so that was another campaign we all suffered through.

Finally, the developer lost that case, the extra stories on top of the roof had to come down, and last year they were torn down. They're down. So that was another victory for this neighborhood. You have to just pay attention around here and everywhere in New York because things happen overnight and when you're not looking and when you're asleep. You can't walk around with your eyes closed, that's for sure.

Q: Yeah. Where does the neighborhood stand as far as—I know that you got some grants? If you would like to talk about how you did that.

Mariano: Yeah. I love to talk about those *[laughs]*. This is one of my dreams coming true actually, because back in the '80s, or late '70s, early '80s I guess, I thought to myself this is a historic district because of the industry that we still have and that was here. I mean, the history of the American Revolution and all that jazz. And so the naïve person that I am, I wrote to Washington asking for all the directives, all the bulletins to nominate Gowanus Canal Corridor to the National Register [of Historic Places] as a historic district. A very awesome task. Bigger than I could do working full-time, mommy, wife, renovating, you know, whatever I was doing. It was beyond me. It was way over my head. And I don't have an architectural background anyway. So I just kept those and would every now and then think about that project in the back of my head. Then when the Army Corp, the United States Army Corp of Engineers did their survey in 2004

nominating Gowanus Canal Corridor to the National Register as a historic place, I said  
hmm, something I could work with here.

Q: Yeah.

Mariano: So I wondered about that for quite a while I guess and then I said hey, this is  
sitting around and nobody is pushing this. Then finally I would do things. I would call the  
Army Corp people. I would call Landmarks. I would push stuff to the Landmarks  
Preservation Commission for landmarking Gowanus. I filled out RFE, request for  
evaluation, for nominating the Gowanus Canal Corridor as an urban industrial district,  
which the Army Corp didn't do. They said historic district. I threw in industrial district  
because I think it's more what it is. We want real, and it's still an honorable title I think.

Then about—I guess what really got me going full speed ahead—to use a cliché there—  
was in I guess it was October, November of 2010, Historic Districts Council had a  
competition called Six to Celebrate. So I said hmm, I'm going to do this for Gowanus.  
I'm doing this. I got to it and I did it and I did a good job I think. The Historic Districts  
Council picked the project as one of the six to celebrate and yay, yay, yay, yay, that led  
me on the right path. They helped in every way they could. When I didn't know what to  
do, I'd say what should I do next.

Well, one day Frampton [Tolbert] said, "Why don't you call the New York State Office  
of Parks and Historic Preservation." And I said, "Frampton, I've argued with those

people over and over again. They'll never listen to me. It won't work." Then I had a talk with myself and I said, Linda, the only way you're going to get what you want is to do it. So I did. I called and invited the State people. They came, I gave them the tour, it was the first time they had come here, and they loved it. They supported the project, and they said they would support the project, and that's how it all began.

Then, I would say, "Okay. Historic District Councils, send me in [*unclear*] Frampton.

What should I do next? How am I going to get this money for this survey, which the State says I have to do?" So they said, "Well, try for a grant. Try the National Trust for

Historic Preservation." "Okay. I'll do that." I got into it and boy I loved that challenge.

I've got to tell you, it was not easy, but it opened me up to all kinds of new things and all new possibilities and I'm learning as I go, and I feel good about that. I feel it's

encouraging, it's rewarding, it's the right thing to do, and I don't have to do it with politicians, developers, or any of those people, which I think is a good thing, because I'm not somebody who bends to that kind of politics.

Then I said, "Okay, Historic Districts people, what can I do next, I still need more

dough?" "Well, why don't you try for the Preservation League of New York State."

"Okay. I'll do that." That was wonderful. Also, you know, Erin [M.] Tobin from the Preservation League came, we gave her a tour of the area, and she loved it. She's very caring about preservation. So, lo and behold.

And of course the Gowanus stands for itself. I mean, that's really the basic reason that they're giving the grants is because they see what I see and honor that. So this is a good thing. There was the Preservation League Grant, which was wonderful. I'll never forget, Erin Tobin saying—and I take great pride in this—saying that Linda's project was so strong that it could serve as a model for other communities in New York State, and that was like, what? Yeah. That is something that just goes on in my head all the time. I feel great about that because it's getting the right thing done here and hopefully it will save more buildings from demolition and that's pretty much all of it. I just want it to be recognized for all the goodness this area has, the buildings, the adaptive reuse.

Then there was the other grant from a private foundation, which was also very fun indeed giving those guys the tour. When they came for the tour, they said they only have twenty minutes. I said, "Well, then we can't go on the tour" *[laughing]*.

Q: What an appropriate response.

Mariano: Yeah. And now it's all happening. It's all happening. And there's more to do and we've signed on. We have a wonderful architectural historian, Gregory Dietrich, who is doing the architectural history, and Alyssa Loorya, who is doing the archeology component that the state has imposed on the project. Not imposed, what's the word?

What's another word?

Q: Proposed?

Mariano: Proposed. Yeah. There you go. So it's very exciting. I can't wait to see the final products, the final results. And I hope there is some new and exciting information that we don't know about yet. They must be very hard at work, because I haven't heard a peep.

Q: When you bring people to the neighborhood—like I know you gave me a tour—but when you bring people out here, what are your absolute most go-to spots?

Mariano: I don't have a must go-to spot. It's just kind of walking, talking, and wiggle-wagging through it all. There's something everywhere, even though it might not be a landmark. It might not even be a working building at the moment, but there's something everywhere.

Q: Yeah. So between the good news of the Superfund and you have grant money coming in, and hopefully this will be a New York City historic district.

Mariano: I hope so.

Q: I hope so, too. How do you feel about, you know—some bad news is the Whole Foods infringement.

Mariano: I'm not worried. I'm not worried, because they don't belong here and I think—yeah, they don't belong here. They don't belong next to a toxic waterway. Why they

chose this site I think either they got bad information or I can't imagine, I can't imagine. Their building plans were never approved by the [New York City] Department of Buildings. I mean, they had a crazy scheme to build an underground kitchen where they would serve fresh foods from. What? Hello! With brown fields, toxic waterway, and now the feds are thinking that might be a good spot for their de-watering when they start dredging the canal. They've been at this since 2005 and Landmarks Preservation Commission has a real nerve. They should not be in the business of annexing part of a lot that has been landmarked to Whole Foods just because they've got I don't know what. This is all wrong.

But we've got a good campaign, a good fight going on now. We have an online petition that the Historic Districts Council very kindly and very generously put up on their website and people are signing on because they want Landmarks Preservation Commission to do that right thing here. So this will go to the two sub-committees, the city council—the petition will go to the council members and city planning members and hopefully those people will choose to do the right thing.

But getting back to Whole Foods, they don't belong here with sixty-five thousand cars a day. Come on. This is a small urban neighborhood. We don't deserve that kind of treatment here, we really don't. It's really unhealthy. We have enough pollution from the canal. Air pollution, air quality is pretty bad as it is and to think of what that horrendous traffic will do. We're getting enough from the Atlantic Yards eventually and the Atlantic Yards is in our



watershed as well. So that's going to make even more problems for the combined sewer overflows and all the toxic sludge that's already in that canal.

Whole Foods also changes the neighborhood. This is a small industrial neighborhood. It is not commercial. It puts the mom and pops out. We have a thriving Co-Op in Park Slope, the Park Slope Food Co-Op, and the mom and pops, they have to survive. They're the people who live here.

Q: Gotcha. Well, I think we could wrap this up because we went through you getting here, FROGG, and all the amazing things you have done for this community and to the most current, the Coignet Stone Building, which is a beautiful building. To hear you say— somebody who has their ear on the pulse probably more than anyone concerning Gowanus, to hear you say you're not worried makes me feel a lot better. I couldn't believe that, especially because that was one of the buildings that we picked for the walking tour this summer. One of the oldest concrete buildings in New York and I didn't know that one was demolished.

Mariano: The Blades Foreman. Mm-hmm.

Q: Yeah. So I'm really glad. So thank you, Linda.

Mariano: You're welcome. This was fun. It wasn't painful at all, Kelly.

Q: I knew it wouldn't be with you.

Mariano: But I'm not the only person with the finger on the pulse in the neighborhood.

Everybody has got their pulse going here because of all the battles going on in every direction. So I do my share and everybody else does their share too.

Q: Yeah. No, that's awesome. Go Gowanus!

Mariano: *[Laughs]*.

[END OF INTERVIEW]