

AUDREY ZAPP 1925-2012

Tenacious advocate for Liberty Park

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The "Godmother" of Liberty State Park, Audrey Zapp, died Thursday in Colorado. She was 86.

Zapp, who campaigned with park founder Morris Pesin and Ted Conrad to turn a contaminated, forgotten waterfront area into a Jersey City state park with views of Ellis Island, Downtown Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty, died at Boulder Community Hospital.

"She was a gentle warrior," Rennie Zapp, 64, of Colorado, said yesterday about his mother. "She was very loving, soft and giving, and she was determined to make sure the rights of people and nature were represented."

Sam Pesin, president of the Friends of Liberty State Park and son of park founder Morris Pesin, described Zapp yesterday as "a determined and passionate fighter."

"She was a passionate environmentalist who loved people and nature," Pesin said. "Liberty State Park has lost a great inspiring hero, the Godmother of Liberty State Park. The Pesin family has lost a beloved friend."

After Liberty State Park opened in 1976, Zapp and Morris Pesin were determined as commissioners on the Liberty State Park Public Advisory Commission to protect the park from "destructive commercialization and privatization," Sam Pesin said.

Their efforts helped block plans to build an amusement park, a 25,000-seat amphitheater, two golf courses, and a water park at Liberty State Park, Pesin said.

Zapp was a leader of the



JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

AUDREY ZAPP with her husband Warren on the Jersey City waterfront in 1979.

"Save the Boulevard Committee," organized in 1969, to prevent construction of a federal highway along Kennedy Boulevard. The committee evolved into the Hudson County Citizens Committee. She was also the leader of the Hudson County Citizens for Clean Air.

"Audrey is the epitome of what it means to be an American citizen," said Richard

Winant, a member of Friends of Liberty State Park. "She has always put the public before herself."

In addition to having the brick-cobbled Audrey Zapp Drive that traverses the north end of the park named in her honor, the Friends of the Liberty State Park awarded her the Liberty State Park "Godmother" Award in 2006. She was saluted as a Jersey Journal

Woman of Achievement in 1971.

Zapp was born in Jersey City in 1925 and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1942.

Zapp moved west after her husband, Warren C. Zapp, died in February 2001, and she had been living with her son Rennie.

According to her son, Zapp also advocated for environmental causes in Colorado.

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