

Sea Lab Marine Science Center plaque memorializes former New Bedford Mayor Kalisz

"A bronze plaque honoring the late former Mayor Fred Kalisz (1957-2021) was installed at Sea Lab this week, a month after a dedication ceremony formally designating the Dr. Frederick M. Kalisz, Jr. Sea Lab Marine Science Education Center. Located at 71 Portland Street, Sea Lab shares the building with the William H. Taylor Elementary School.

Mrs. Patricia Kalisz along with her son, Rick Kalisz III, were on hand for the installation by workers of the plaque, which had been delayed due to supply chain disruptions. The plaque finalizes the Dr. Frederick M. Kalisz, Jr. Sea Lab Marine Science Education Center, which included the unveiling of an exterior sign during an August 13 dedication ceremony that attracted 450 attendees.

At the August 13 event, Mayor Jon Mitchell noted Sea Lab's dedication had the unanimous support of the New Bedford School Committee and City Council. Of Kalisz, Mayor Mitchell recalled, "he was always in motion; he never stopped exerting himself in service to others, the city and everyone who lived in it. He strove over his four terms to activate the city's potential every single waking hour."



Rick Kalisz III and Mrs. Patricia Kalisz pose with a plaque honoring the late former Mayor Fred Kalisz at Sea Lab. New Bedford Public Schools photo.

George Leontire, who served as city solicitor during the Kalisz years, noted the Dr. Frederick M. Kalisz, Jr. Memorial Scholarship has begun awarding scholarships to New Bedford students. In the care of the SouthCoast Community Foundation, the scholarship fund continues to accept donations from the public, he said.

Dr. Joseph Costa, Executive Director, Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program announced that over the next two years his program “will be providing \$50,000 to Sea Lab. Most of these funds to be used to pay tuition for students in financial need and promoting equity of access, with the remainder of the funds to buy equipment and supplies, pay for fieldtrips and fund special projects.”

Other participants in the August ceremony included Pete Braley, Rev. Michael Racine, musician Mike Couto, Andrew

O'Leary, Tori Kalisz, Frank Tedesco of Mount Vernon Group Architects, Michael Kalisz, Trembley's Bus Company and the New Bedford Police Department Honor Guard.

The plaque's installation comes a year after the School Committee voted unanimously on a motion by member Bruce Oliveira to name the Sea Lab building for Dr. Kalisz, who as Mayor oversaw the construction of the Sea Lab building in 2005. The School Committee action came after City Council support to recognize the civic and educational contributions of Mayor Kalisz by dedicating a public school building in his honor. In October of last year, a committee to oversee the project included John Beauregard, Simone Bourgeois, Joseph Cordeiro, Dr. Joseph Costa, Stephen Furtado, Mrs. Kalisz, Rick Kalisz III, Michael Kalisz, George Leontire, Arthur Motta, Andrew O'Leary, Bruce Oliveira and Dr. Steven White.

Sea Lab is New Bedford Public Schools' nationally recognized marine science education program for the perpetuation of real science activities. Historically, Sea Lab existed as a six-week summer program servicing academically serious students since 1968. The program expanded in 2000 to the entire school year in order to introduce a larger student population to secondary and postsecondary-level science concepts, marine science and aquatic activities for students Kindergarten through Grade 12."