



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

I-86 Bridge Renamed After Jamestown's World-Renowned Naturalist Roger Tory Peterson

CATHARINE YOUNG October 25, 2011



JAMESTOWN – The memory of Jamestown's Roger Tory Peterson, one of the world's best known naturalists of all time, was celebrated at a bridge christening ceremony on Friday.

State Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean), who sponsored legislation to name the bridge, Assemblyman Andrew Goodell (R,C-Chautauqua) and community leaders unveiled signs that will be placed on the Interstate 86 span over Falconer-Kimball Stand Road/County Route 138.

The dedication was held at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History, which attracts visitors from around the country.

“When you have such an accomplished native son, you should pay tribute to his legacy in a special way. Roger Tory Peterson was America’s preeminent naturalist and conservationist, who is renowned for his ‘Peterson’s Field Guides.’ Many travelers will recognize his name, and we hope they will stop to visit the Institute, learn more about his works, and patronize our local small businesses,” Senator Young said.

“I sincerely thank bill sponsor former Assemblyman William Parment, and former Governor David Paterson for their support in making this endeavor a reality,” Senator Young said.

Assemblyman Andrew Goodell (R-C Jamestown) expressed his appreciation to Senator Young for taking the lead in naming this bridge after Roger Tory Peterson. Mr. Goodell noted, “Chautauqua County residents are rightfully proud of tremendous contributions made by Roger Tory Peterson. His passion for our natural world has touched thousands of lives, and continues to touch people through the outstanding efforts of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History located here in Jamestown.”

The idea for naming the bridge came from Lee Harkness, Executive Director of the Downtown Jamestown Development Corporation, as a creative way to focus on one of the area’s luminaries.

“Jamestown and Chautauqua County have so many great assets and what better way could there be to spotlight one of our best assets, Mr. Roger Tory Peterson? We owe a big thank you to Senator Young and Assemblyman Parment for making the naming of this bridge possible,” said Lee Harkness.

Jim Berry, President of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History,

said, "Dedicating the bridge in memory of Jamestown and America's most famous 20th century naturalist Roger Tory Peterson, is a fitting and proper tribute to him. Visitors from around the nation cross this bridge every day to visit Peterson's hometown and the museum that bears his name."

Born on August 28, 1908 in Jamestown to immigrant parents, Peterson became America's most decorated and well-known naturalist.

Jamestown was where young Roger developed his love of nature. At age 11,

while hiking with the Junior Audubon Club on Swede Hill, he touched a tired

Northern Flicker bird that burst into flight. This interaction immediately ignited his passion.

From that time, his home on Bowen Street became filled with nature specimens.

After graduating from Jamestown High School at age 16 in 1925, he stayed in

Jamestown for two years, working at the Union National Furniture Company, before moving to New York City to pursue his studies and career.

He went on to write a number of books, including his famous "Peterson's Field

Guides" that have sold millions of copies and helped to revolutionize the world of modern bird watching.

He received every major award for ornithology, natural science, and conservation, as well as numerous honorary degrees, medals, and citations, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award of the nation.

In 1984, the Roger Tory Peterson Institute was established in Jamestown as an

educational institution charged with the preservation of Peterson's lifetime body of work and continuation of his teachings.

On July 28, 1996, Peterson died at the age of 87.

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