



NEWS RELEASE

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February 28, 2008

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Iconic Mecom Fountain Lights Hermann Park Entrance

Houston Mayor Bill White in conjunction with The Houston Parks and Recreation Department, The Hotel ZaZa and the Hermann Park Conservancy will lead the celebration to flip the switch and bring lights back to Mecom Fountain again. The circus themed celebration is scheduled to begin on Friday, February 29 at 6:00 p.m.

"Since 1964, Mecom Fountain has marked the entrance to one of our City's oldest and best loved greenspaces, Hermann Park," said Mayor Bill White. "But for over a year now it's only been able to guide visitors to the park during the day light hours. On Friday night, that will change and Mecom Fountain will once again be a beacon of light guiding visitors to Hermann Park and the Museum District."

The celebration will feature performances by the Willowridge High School Mighty Eagle Marching Band as well as strolling performances by jugglers, fire eaters, breathers, stilt walkers, acrobats and more.

"We are looking forward to bringing Mecom Fountain back for visitors to enjoy in all its splendor," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department.

"We are especially grateful to the Hotel ZaZa for their assistance in making this celebration such an exciting event."

The Hotel ZaZa will be hosting a private event to celebrate the re-lighting of the Mecom Fountain.

(more)

In 1964 oil magnate John W. Mecom and his wife Mary presented Mecom Fountain as a gift to the City. The fountain was designed by Eugene Werlin and was built by Warrior Constructors at a cost of \$200,000. When the fountain was originally built, it was the largest fountain in the city.

The Mecom is actually three raised pools within one main, oblong pool. It sits within the traffic circle at the entrance to Hermann Park. Its three fountains, each with a central jet, shoot water skyward, with the highest jet shooting 20 feet into the air. Three smaller jets send water to the center of the three fountains. The base of the fountain is constructed of white marble. The night lighting and control are electronically operated and wind sensors regulate the water height to guard against spray on windy days. The fountain has a total of 264 lights and shoots 8,000 gallons of water per minute. The fountain replaced the sunken gardens that were originally on the property and had fallen into disrepair. The gardens were raised 4 ½ feet after the fountain's construction and now form the fountain's base.

In 2006, vandals stole 246 of the fountain's lights. Funds for their replacement and council approval for their purchase were secured in 2007. The replacement lights were received in January of 2008 and installation and refocusing took three weeks to complete. Security measures to protect the Mecom Fountain lights will include additional surveillance by the Houston Police Department, the Hotel ZaZa and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department.

For more information on Mecom Fountain or the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, please call (713) 845-1135 or visit us online at www.houstonparks.org.