

**Remarks of
Congressman Joe Moakley
Boston Harbor Alliance
Gerry Studds Stewardship Award
Boston Harbor Hotel
October 23, 2000**

CONGRESSMAN JOE MOAKLEY
OFFICE OF THE CLERK
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20543

○ Thank you all for inviting me here
this evening. /

I am deeply honored to have been
chosen as the recipient of the Year ~~2000~~,
~~the~~ Gerry Studds Stewardship
Award. //

○ Congressman Studds and I were
elected the same year to the United
States Congress, and took the oath of
office together for the first time in
January, 1973. /

○ We served together until his retirement in 1996. / And let me tell you, during his twenty-three years in the Congress, Gerry Studds was responsible for some of the most effective and prolific environmental and maritime legislation, in the history of the Congress. /

○ Unfortunately, when the Republicans won the majority in 1994, they eliminated Gerry's Committee, Merchant Marine and Fisheries, just when we were about to make Cuba part of the Boston Harbor Islands ~~Historical~~ Park System. /

I'm also deeply honored to share the stage this evening with my good friend, Gloria Larson, who will be the recipient of the "private sector" Gerry Studds Stewardship Award.

An honorary Democrat, Gloria has done a magnificent job as Governor Weld's Secretary of ~~Environmental~~^{Economic} Affairs, and was key to the development of today's Boston Harbor Islands' Management System.

I've enjoyed working with her, and continue to do so, as she shepherd's the new Convention Center into the new Millennium.

My friends, I'm pleased not only to accept your award this evening – but to share it – to share it with all of you who have worked so passionately, and continue to do so, in restoring this unique natural resource to its place among the worlds treasures.

As we can see by looking back just a decade or so, it is far too easy to take for granted, the depth of history and unique natural beauty, of our own Boston Harbor and its magnificent islands.

As many of you know, over the past three hundred years, Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay, have truly run the gauntlet, from its pristine natural beauty, Boston Harbor became a victim of industry, of urban growth and of pollution.

And now, like the Phoenix, it is ~~being~~ RISING ONCE AGAIN.

As the birthplace of democracy in America, the City of Boston owes its existence to the Harbor and its islands, and we must never forget that.

○ **It was, after-all, the Harbor that attracted the first settlers and merchants who were drawn here by the incredible geography that makes Boston one of the most protected and most hospitable ports in all of the world, and perhaps the most historic in the United States. /**

○ **It was Boston Harbor that steeped the tea thrown from of the sailing ship Beaver, as colonists began rebelling against the unjust taxation of the British Empire. /**

It was Boston Harbor that played host to the first British troops to be evacuated from American soil, as patriots drove the Red Coats from Dorchester Heights. / And it was Boston's Inner Harbor that allowed Paul Revere to avoid capture as his oarsmen rowed him from the North End toward Charlestown, where he began his famous midnight ride. //

Throughout our Nation's history Boston Harbor and its islands have been active participants. /

Castle Island, believed to be the oldest military fortification in America, has guarded the inner harbor since the first fortification was erected in 1634. //

Edgar Allen Poe, who was actually stationed at the fort, based the chilling tale of the "Cask of the Amontilado", on a story, handed down from soldier to soldier, of a rogue officer, who was buried alive

~~IN THE WALLS OF THE FORT.~~ IN THE WALLS OF THE FORT. //

Georges Island which was active in the Civil War as a training camp for Union Soldiers, and a prison camp for Confederates, gives us the story of the Lady in Black. And Nix's Mate marks the place where the bodies of pirates were chained as a message to others to respect the laws of the sea.

But for all of its richness in history, and all of its natural beauty, Boston Harbor has been sorely mistreated.

As a State Senator in the 1960's I
Chaired a special commission on the
Boston Harbor Islands. The
Commission discovered that the
Army Corps of Engineer was
dumping hazardous materials
directly into Massachusetts Bay.
Their rationale for the materials, they
said were far too dangerous to store
on land.

I'm proud to say that as a result of
that discovery I believe we passed
the first "Anti-Dumping" legislation
in the Country.

During the same time period, we brought the islands from private ownership to state ownership, creating the Boston Harbor Islands State Park. This was in response to plans of private developers to bring the World's Fair to the islands. To this day, I am grateful that we prevented the construction of what would now be dilapidated structures, littering the thirty one Boston Harbor Islands.

We've come a long way since Frederick Law Olmsted first approached the Massachusetts Legislature in 1886, only to have them reject his modest proposal for conservation on the islands, through reforestation. /

Through the stewardship of The Boston Harbor Alliance in partnership with, Save the Harbor Save the Bay, the National Parks Service, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, Massport, the Metropolitan District Commission, the Department of Environmental Management, Friends of Boston Harbor, the University of Massachusetts, the Conservation Law Foundation, and the Boston Harbor Association, we have absolutely, and resolutely, turned the tide. //

We've come a long way since George Bush declared that Boston Harbor was the filthiest harbor in America. We've come a long way since Judge Mazzone mandated that we clean up Boston Harbor once and for all. And we've come a long way since the days when one could find one's way to the harbor based solely on one's sense of smell.

And today, I'm proud to say, working together, we have made a tremendous difference.

Through education and awareness the public is beginning once again to appreciate the beauty of Boston's beaches and the recreational opportunities of the islands.

The investment has been high, but it has been entirely worth it.

Phytoplankton levels have returned to a point unimaginable in the 1980's.

Cod, flounder, striped bass, and blue fish, have returned in schools. Harbor porpoises, and seals, have once again begun to grace us with their playful antics, and herring runs, have nearly doubled since the 1970's.

Sunbathers, swimmers, and fishermen, have once again become a sight commonplace on our eight miles of beaches, and commuters have discovered utilizing water transportation for getting to and from work.

None of this would have happened
none of this could have happened
without the incredible and
unrelenting efforts of all of you who
have given so much of your time
and effort, to breath new life into
this wonderful resource.

As I said earlier, I am here tonight not so much to accept this award, but to share it with all of you, who have worked so hard to restore Boston Harbor to its rightful place among our Nation's treasures.

So please, give yourselves a round of applause for all you have achieved.

Let's keep up the great work.

Thank you very much!

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CONGRESSMAN JOHN JOSEPH
MOAKLEY RANKIN