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MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG UNVEILS PLAQUE AT THE TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today unveiled a plaque designating the Brown Building, the site of the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire, as New York City's newest designated landmark. The ceremony followed today's designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the building as a New York City landmark. Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Robert B. Tierney, Landmarks Preservation Foundation Chair Susan Ball, New York University Vice-President of University Relations Lynne P. Browne, representatives of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY), as well as members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union now the Union of Needletrades Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) joined Mayor Bloomberg at the Brown Building for the plaque dedication ceremony on the 92nd anniversary of the fire.

"Today's designation of the Brown Building serves to remind us of one of our greatest attributes - our City's ability to follow great tragedy with great progress," said Mayor Bloomberg. "This building will stand as a landmark to our City's ability to emerge from tragedy but never forget its past or its lessons."

"On this 92nd anniversary of the tragic Triangle shirtwaist fire, I am honored to officially recognize the Brown Building for its significant role in the history of our City," said Robert Tierney. "This building exemplifies the concept that monuments of the past are an important gateway to the present."

Constructed in 1900-01 as a ten-story loft building by Joseph J. Asch, the Brown Building originally housed the Triangle Waist Company on its top three floors. On March 25, 1911, the Brown Building became the site of one of the worst industrial disasters in American history when a fire on the eighth floor spread to the floors above. Locked doors and inadequate fire escapes contributed to the deaths of 146 workers. The tragedy became a catalyst for a broad range of labor, fire safety code and building code reforms.

After the fire, the building was repaired and returned to industrial use. In 1916, New York University rented the eighth floor and gradually took over the entire building, which now houses the university's chemistry and biology departments. Starting with the 50th anniversary of the fire and each year since, the FDNY and UNITE have marked the anniversary of the Triangle fire with a memorial ceremony.

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