July 20, 2011

Farmingville, NY - Long-time Brookhaven Town Highway Superintendent Harold H. Malkmes, a pioneer in the "green" movement, long before "green" was even a thought, will be memorialized at a service Wednesday, July 27, 2011 at 12 noon at the Harold H. Malkmes Wildlife and Ecology Education Center in Holtsville. All are welcome to share in this remembrance.

Harold Malkmes was the founder of the Holtsville Ecology Site and a loved and well-respected public servant. Harold had a long history of recycling and educating the community about caring for our environment.

As Superintendent of Highways, Harold H. Malkmes initiated the process of picking up loose leaves on the roadsides and began a small recycling operation so that the resulting compost could be returned to residents for their lawn and garden use. Over time, he provided residents with biodegradable paper leaf bags to make the composting process more efficient. Under his direction, the highway employees assigned to the composting facility began to grow plantings that could be used to control erosion on roadsides. Ultimately, flowering and other plants were grown at the site and used for roadside beautification projects and Town offices. About the same time, a raccoon imprinted by humans was brought in and tended to by the Pine Road Ecology Center employees. As the residents would pick up compost, their children learned about Rocky, the rescued raccoon.

From these humble beginnings, in 1980 Harold Malkmes was offered an opportunity to move the ever expanding, recycling and educational ecology operation to Holtsville, where the landfill had been closed and 80 plus acres were available. Under Harold H. Malkmes’ direction the Highway Department, along with many Scout volunteers, began to re-purpose the covered hills of garbage with plantings and trees and recycled the entire area. The greenhouse operation was expanded, and the animal preserve began to grow with farm animals and the addition of two buffalo. Eventually, injured and non-releasable wild animals began to be cared for and housed at the new site with the help of community donations. Educational programs and tours had begun to teach the public and the youth about the environment, wildlife, and recycling programs. The old, unsightly landfill became a fine example of "green" living and others from all over the country have come to use Harold’s realized dream for the Ecology site as a prototype for reclaiming landfills and recycling for their new "green" efforts.

Through Harold’s tireless efforts and endless energy, the Harold H. Malkmes Wildlife and Ecology Education Center has become a spectacular multi-use facility, unique on Long Island.

A visionary and a community leader, Harold H. Malkmes has achieved his life-long goal of being an authentic public servant.

Harold’s passing on May 19, 2011 closes a chapter of Brookhaven's history. On Wednesday, July 27, 2011 at 12 noon a memorial service to honor Harold will be held at the Harold H. Malkmes Wildlife and Ecology Education Center in Holtsville.