

THE BLADE'S Pages of Opinion

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Betty Mauk's 'Park'

WHEN the small riverfront site at the foot of Madison Avenue was christened Promenade Park in 1972 — a name suggested by a sixth-grade student at Meadowvale School — it was not much of a park as such things go.

When the crepes concession stand (La Creperie) that has been the purveyor of crepes and other French delights in Promenade Park for the past several years officially hung up the griddles and closed the doors last Wednesday, it still had not become much of a park by any reckoning.

Yet, through the drive, dedication, energy, and persistence of Mrs. Betty Mauk, this tiny area on the west bank of the Maumee has taken on a meaning for downtown Toledo far in excess of its modest size.

It became the noontime gathering spot for thousands of Toledoans who had come to the park to lunch, bask in the sun, look at the river, or just plain relax.

It served as the stage for a variety of outdoor entertainment, much of it planned and arranged by Mrs. Mauk and the Junior League of Toledo.

It became the boarding dock for the Arawanna, the small pleasure craft which Mrs. Mauk purchased (and later sold) that has carried

thousands of persons on river cruises as part of the park's attractions.

It was and still is the location of the most visible French connection in the downtown area — the genuine Parisian kiosk at the park's Madison Avenue entrance which Mrs. Mauk cajoled French officials into dispatching to Toledo.

And in many other ways Promenade Park has served as a valuable reminder of the esthetic pleasures that can accrue to any city wise enough to make good use of its major waterfronts.

Sometime this winter, Promenade Park as it exists today will give way as work by the city begins on developing a new \$8.6 million riverfront park stretching from Cherry Street to Monroe Street. If that project comes off as scheduled, Toledo in time will finally have a riverside park of which it can be justly proud.

That will be fine. But for a great many Toledoans, what will be remembered longest about Promenade Park and its successor is the contribution to using and beautifying our riverbanks that came from the unflagging efforts of that passionate and unflappable pioneer — Mrs. Betty Mauk.