

August 9, 2010

It may seem hard to believe, but Burlington was the birthplace of one of the greatest philosophers and educators of all times, John Dewey. Born in Burlington on October 20, 1859, John Dewey attended Burlington schools and graduated from the University of Vermont at the age of 20. As a child and young man in the 1860s and 1870s, Dewey loved to explore Burlington, always appreciating the people he met here and the beauty of the natural environment.

After Dewey completed graduate work at Johns Hopkins University, he distinguished himself at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, Dewey founded the famous Laboratory School at Chicago, and his international influence on education continued to grow over the years. His many books were published in numerous languages.

Burlington celebrated Dewey's 90th birthday in 1949 in a grand way. His visit was even covered in detail by a New York Times correspondent. Dewey and his wife Roberta arrived by train from his home in New York City and were welcomed at a festive homecoming in front of the Waterman Building at UVM. He and his wife enjoyed a tour of the campus and the surrounding area before leaving on the evening train back to New York.

In his teaching and writing, John Dewey emphasized the great value of creative individuals in the context of a democratic society. His philosophy influenced countless thinkers and entrepreneurs over the years. Throughout his life Dewey continued as a leader of educational reform. His ideas live on in every school, college, and university throughout the country.

Since John Dewey's legacy is as important as ever today and he was born in this wonderful city 151 years ago, we believe that he should be recognized appropriately by the city of Burlington. What better way to recognize and acknowledge the importance of this internationally-known native son than by renaming Waterfront Park **John Dewey Waterfront Park** and designating October 20 as **John Dewey Day**? We urge the City Council, Mayor, and Parks and Recreation Commission and Department to move as quickly as possible in this way to honor John Dewey's legacy in Burlington and around the world.

Thank you.

The John Dewey Committee,

Burlington, Vermont 864-1888

