

JASA West Side Center Celebrates Henryk Kaston's 100th Birthday

When Henryk Kaston celebrated his 100th birthday on February 16th at the West Side Senior Center, he could look back on a remarkable life. Highlights have included fighting in the French Resistance during World War II; friendship with Salvador Dali, who designed jewelry that Henryk made; friendship with Albert Einstein; playing violin in the Metropolitan Opera orchestra; and becoming a master violin bowmaker whose work was prized by Jascha Heifetz and other famous musicians.

More than 100 people came to celebrate, including Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer—who announced that he had declared the occasion Henryk Kaston Appreciation Day in the Borough of Manhattan. State Assembly member Linda Rosenthal also spoke. Luminaries who sent messages included President Obama, Mayor Bloomberg, and the chief rabbis of Israel and Haifa.

Judith Kronengold, a senior center member, was so inspired by the event that she picked up her violin for the first time in 16 years to prepare and play Mimi's aria from *La Boheme*. Concert violinist Stephanie Chase played a Paganini pizzicato. Three generations of Henryk's family joined the festivities. Asked how it felt to be the child of a 100-year-old man, his daughter, Diane Kaston, responded with a radiant smile and a single word: "Blessed."



Henryk Kaston with Borough President Scott Stringer and aide Esther Thomas