

Two Famous Bridges Celebrated

Written by Steve Frank

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Yesterday, a 'tale of two bridges,' as two internationally famous bridges were celebrated. Visitors and staff of the Blue Ridge Parkway commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Linn Cove Viaduct in ceremony and speeches within view of the structure. The September 11th date was chosen for the Parkway celebration because the construction of the Parkway itself kicked off on the date. For the last link of that project, the viaduct, Italian craftsmen were called to Linville to do much of fitting the puzzle of cement parts together—none identical—to create the viaduct. The Blue Ridge Parkway is the most visited National Park and the Linn Cove Viaduct is its most popular. It became the option after Grandfather Mountain owner Hugh Morton refused the National Park Services' first plan to tunnel through Grandfather Mountain. Then the celebration shifted to the top of Grandfather Mountain, where the Mile High Swinging Bridge celebrated 60 years of facing the winds atop Grandfather. Harris Prevost told the gathering about the vision of the man who influenced both projects, Hugh Morton, "The mountain, in a sense, is crossing its own bridge, transitioning from one era to another, but still keeping true to Hugh Morton's vision. Part of that vision was Mr. Morton's very strong feeling that he didn't own Grandfather Mountain—he was its caretaker."