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Awards Honor Outstanding Achievements in Historic Preservation

LITTLE ROCK—On January 17, 2020, Preserve Arkansas hosted its annual Arkansas Preservation Awards dinner and program to honor individuals and organizations for projects focused on historic preservation, education, and advocacy throughout the state. Honorees and guests celebrated with a reception and banquet at the Arkansas Governor's Mansion in Little Rock, followed by a program recognizing the award-winning projects. Joe David Rice of Little Rock served as Master of Ceremonies for the event. Silver Table Sponsors for the 2019 Arkansas Preservation Awards were the Division of Arkansas Heritage, First Community Bank and Mr. Michael Gillihan, and Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects. Photos from the Arkansas Preservation Awards are available at PreserveArkansas.org.

2019 Arkansas Preservation Award Recipients

Named in honor of Preserve Arkansas's founding president, the **Parker Westbrook Award for Lifetime Achievement** was given to **John P. Gill of Little Rock**. Little Rock attorney and historian John P. Gill has long had a keen interest in the preservation of Arkansas's history and architecture. He has demonstrated a passion for preservation through his service on numerous boards and commissions and authored books about Arkansas's historic county courthouses, Depression-era post office art, and the Arkansas Governor's Mansion. A tireless preservation advocate, Gill has worked on behalf of significant projects throughout the state.

The **Award for Excellence in Heritage Preservation** was presented to the **Tontitown Historical Museum, City of Tontitown, and Davis Videos** for the **Tontitown Oral History Project**, which documented first-person accounts of life in the Italian-American community and encouraged residents to participate in the preservation of Tontitown's heritage.

The **Award for Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation** was presented to the **Hotel Hale in Hot Springs**. Located on Bathhouse Row in Hot Springs National Park, the Hale Bathhouse was rehabilitated to house a restaurant and boutique hotel. The Honorable Pat and Mrs. Ellen McCabe, Taylor/Kempkes Architects, and Harrison Construction Company were recognized with the award.

An **Honorable Mention for Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation** was given to **First National Bank of Fort Smith**. This project revealed intricate plaster detailing that had been hidden for decades in the bank lobby and renovated upper floors of the Garrison Avenue branch. First National Bank of Fort Smith, Studio 6 Architects, and Beshears Construction were recognized with the award.

An **Honorable Mention for Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation** was given to the **Independence County Library in Batesville**. By renovating the first two floors of the historic Barnett Building as its new home, the Independence County Library was able to maintain its downtown

presence, offer expanded services, and contribute to downtown Batesville's resurgence. The Independence County Library System, Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects, and Clark Contractors were recognized with the award.

The **Award for Excellence in Preservation through Restoration** was presented to the **Taylor House at Hollywood Plantation near Tillar**. Built in 1846 on the banks of Bayou Bartholomew, the Taylor House was painstakingly restored to interpret life on one of the state's earliest cotton plantations. The University of Arkansas at Monticello, JAMESON Architects, V.R. Smith & Sons, Naff Construction, and A-Plus Builders were recognized with the award.

An **Honorable Mention for Excellence in Preservation through Restoration** was given to the **Arkansas House of Representatives Chamber Desks and Ceiling Project at the State Capitol in Little Rock**. This multi-year project restored the chamber ceiling and created a new desk arrangement based on the original 1914 design. The Arkansas House of Representatives, Clements & Associates Architecture, and Baldwin & Shell Construction were recognized with the award.

The **Award for Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Education** went to the **City of Little Rock Department of Planning and Development** for its **Historic Sites Web Application**. Searchable by street address, the Historic Sites App provides building histories, photos, and maps on one site, making it easy to learn about historic properties in the capital city.

An **Honorable Mention for Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Education** was given to the **UA Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture and UA Little Rock Department of Art and Design for the Robinson Center exhibit at the historic Joseph Taylor Robinson Memorial Auditorium**. This permanent exhibit in Little Rock's Robinson Center features 10 panels detailing the building's history from its construction to the grand re-opening in 2016.

The **Award for Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Advocacy** was presented to **William Hawkins and Dr. John Wheeler of Camden** for their efforts to promote and encourage historic preservation in their beloved hometown of Camden.

Named for Eureka Springs writer and historic preservationist Ned Shank, the **Award for Outstanding Preservation Publication** was presented to ***Images of America: Cane Hill*** by Bobby R. Braly, published by Arcadia Press. This book highlights the rich history of Cane Hill in northwest Arkansas and the work to restore its many National Register-listed properties.

The **Award for Excellence in Personal Projects** was presented to **Michael Gillihan** for the **Spring Mill in Batesville**. Gillihan restored the oldest water-powered gristmill in Arkansas so it could be reopened to the public and used as a wedding venue.

The **Award for Outstanding Achievement in Adaptive Reuse – Large Scale Development** was presented to **The Paint Factory in Little Rock**. Located in the 1947 Stebbins & Roberts Building, The Paint Factory is a mixed-use development with a restaurant, apartments, community room, and the Cromwell firm's headquarters. Cromwell MT, LLC, Cromwell Architects Engineers, and Central Construction Group were recognized with the award.

The **Award for Outstanding Achievement in Adaptive Reuse – Small Scale Development** was presented to **Bark Bar in Little Rock**. This project transformed a historic church into Bark Bar, Arkansas's first indoor/outdoor off-leash dog park and restaurant. Happy Days Investments, AMR Architects, Bark Bar, and Paul Page Dwellings were recognized with the award.

An **Honorable Mention for Outstanding Achievement in Adaptive Reuse** was given to **Fassler Hall in Little Rock**. Located in the 1947 Paragon Printing Building, Fassler Hall is a 7,400-square-foot German-inspired beer hall and restaurant with an outdoor beer garden. The McNellies Group, AMR Architects, and Central Construction Group were recognized with the award.

The **Award for Outstanding Preservation Reporting in the Media** was presented to **Tia Lyons of the *El Dorado News-Times*** for her in-depth coverage of historic preservation activities in El Dorado over the past 20 years.

An Award for **Special Recognition of Outstanding Stewardship** was presented to **Kerry McCoy of Little Rock** for her work to preserve and rehabilitate the historic Taborian Hall and Dreamland Ballroom on West 9th Street in Little Rock.

The **Award for Outstanding New Construction in a Historic Setting** was presented to the **Robinson Center Renovation and Expansion Project in Little Rock**. The renovation and expansion of the Robinson Center dramatically reimagined the historic landmark as a state-of-the-art performance and conference venue and connected the building to the riverfront greenway. The Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau, Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects, and CDI Contractors/Hunt Construction Group were recognized with the award.

Preserve Arkansas is the only statewide nonprofit advocate for the preservation of Arkansas's historic places. The organization works to build stronger communities by reconnecting Arkansans to our heritage and empowering people to save and rehabilitate historic places. For more information about Preserve Arkansas or the Arkansas Preservation Awards, contact Rachel Patton at 501-372-4757, rpatton@preservearkansas.org, or visit PreserveArkansas.org.

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