



Preserve Arkansas Presents 2020 Arkansas Preservation Awards

The 2020 Arkansas Preservation Awards were presented in a virtual ceremony on January 22, 2021. The program was emceed by Ashley King of The Vine on THV11 and featured live commentary and Zoom check-ins with event sponsors. A full list of honorees and project descriptions is below.

Parker Westbrook Award for Lifetime Achievement: Main Street Arkansas. Named in honor of Preserve Arkansas's founding president, the Parker Westbrook Award recognizes significant achievements in historic preservation over a period of years. Since its founding, Arkansas's Main Street programs have provided crucial on-the-ground support for local businesses—attracting more than \$573 million in public and private investment and creating nearly 8,000 net new jobs and 1,500 net new businesses. Main Street Arkansas works with 21 Main Street programs and 19 Downtown Network communities to capitalize on the unique assets that characterize their downtowns and recruit and retain businesses. Main Street Arkansas is a part of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

"This year, Main Street Arkansas is being honored for its role in providing additional grant monies and support to local Main Street programs throughout the state during the pandemic, helping to save local businesses and keep our historic downtowns vibrant," Preserve Arkansas Executive Director Rachel Patton said.

Also during the ceremony, 15 other preservation projects were recognized. They are:

Excellence in Heritage Preservation: Drew Calhoun of Corning. Calhoun became interested in local history at the age of 14 when he discovered his ancestor was a pioneer Baptist preacher in Clay and Randolph counties. That interest inspired him to create the Corning Beautification Committee, which has undertaken many projects to enhance Corning's historic downtown area.

Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation: Wilson Place Apartments, El Dorado. Constructed in 1926, the Wilson Place Apartments are an example of what popped up in the town following the discovery of oil in 1921. Recognizing that oilmen were transient, the Smith Real Estate Co. built an upscale apartment building. At the time, the *El Dorado Daily News* said it provided "ultra-modern luxurious accommodations" that included maid and janitor services, and ice delivery. The apartments were rehabilitated with the help of federal and state historic tax credits.

Excellence in Preservation through Restoration: Cane Hill Presbyterian Church. Built in 1891, the church is the Washington County community's last functioning house of worship. Over the years, the church had been modified, and the work changed its look; the bell tower and parts of the foundation needed repair. Using a grant from the Arkansas Historic Preservation program, along with generous private donations, the project restored the church to its former glory. It continues to serve the Cane Hill Presbyterian congregation and is a venue for the Historic Cane Hill Foundation.



Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Education -- Print Media: Hillcrest Residents Association for its historic neighborhood design handbook. After the modification and destruction of many properties, the association focused on educating residents on the importance of retaining historic buildings and promoting development that ties in with the community. A comic book, designed to make historic preservation easy to understand, was delivered to every household in Hillcrest.

Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Education -- Digital Media: Main Street Siloam Springs for its "Downtown Then and Now -- Historic Building Registry." The project created an online directory of historic downtown buildings including historic and current photos, a brief history of each property, and information for owners and potential investors.

Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Advocacy: Hillcrest Residents Association for its design overlay district campaign. The group is working to preserve the character of the neighborhood in terms of diversity, economic vitality, accessibility, and architectural character. The group's recommendations include limits on the size and scale of new structures and additions, incentives to renovate rather than demolish, and making sure the neighborhood is pedestrian-friendly.

Ned Shank Award for Outstanding Preservation Publication: "Historic Preservation: The Boyhood Home of Levon Helm" by Dr. Ann Ballard Bryan, published in the *National Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*. Bryan is an instructor at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. Her article was based on a project by her interior design students on the Marvell boyhood home of the musician. Ned Shank was a writer and preservationist at Eureka Springs.

Excellence in Personal Projects: Boyce and Pat Dixon for their rehabilitation of a Gordon-Van Tine Kit Home in Walnut Ridge. The Dixons bought the 1926-era house in 2019. Popular in the early part of the 20th century, kit houses could be ordered with various plans and materials. This house had deteriorated in recent years, and the Dixons put time, money, and sweat equity into rehabilitating it.

Outstanding Preservation Reporting in the Media: Cary Jenkins, a staff writer and photographer at the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. Jenkins wrote and photographed a seven-part series on Arkansas's most endangered places for the newspaper. She traveled to each site, photographed each property, and interviewed stakeholders. Her work was featured in the newspaper's Style section and showcased unique or unusual architecture of the buildings.

Outstanding New Construction in a Historic Setting: Jacksonport State Park Visitor Center. In northeastern Arkansas at the union of the White and Black rivers, Jacksonport was a thriving 1800s port town and a strategic Civil War stronghold. The new visitor's center represents the divided North and South under one roof connected by a bridge -- a symbol of reunification.

Outstanding Work by a Craftsperson: Nathanael DeVries of Jacksonville. At 16, DeVries was intrigued by log frame construction techniques. He worked with a carpentry expert to cut log timbers in the



forest, transport them, and prepare them using hand tools. He also learned basic blacksmith skills and used them to duplicate nails, hinges, and other hardware.

Outstanding Service in Neighborhood Preservation: Justin Skinner of Fort Smith. Skinner and his company, Historical Holdings, rehabilitated five vacant properties in Fort Smith's Belle Grove Historic District using federal and state historic tax credits, contributing to neighborhood revitalization.

Outstanding Achievement in Adaptive Reuse: Winchester Auto Building, Little Rock. The building was constructed in 1947 and originally housed an auto store. Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects rehabilitated the structure into an open studio office that now serves as its headquarters.

Honorable Mention for Outstanding Achievement in Adaptive Reuse: AC Hotel Downtown Little Rock. The hotel occupies two historic buildings -- the 1923 Hall Building and the 1946 Davidson Building. The adaptive reuse project increased nighttime foot traffic along Capitol Avenue, expanding downtown revitalization efforts.

Honorable Mention for Outstanding Achievement in Adaptive Reuse: Tommy Marshall Curiosity Center, Eudora. Three long-vacant commercial buildings were bought by the J. Austin White Cultural Center, a nonprofit organization that provides arts and cultural programming for children in the Delta, and converted into a STEM-museum.