

PLACE *matters*

Inspire

New World
Construction,
Old World Style



IN THIS *issue*

- Abilene Preservation Awards
- Swenson House Deed Transfer
- Tribute to Jim Stuart

Abilene Preservation League

Since 1977, Abilene Preservation League has celebrated the city's historic built environment — places that reflect the history and character of the city. Through charitable support, advocacy, education, recognition and volunteerism, APL seeks to inspire Abilenians to respect, save and preserve the past, ensuring a richer, more informed future for all.

OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

Josh Black	<i>President</i>
Austin Butler	<i>President-Elect</i>
Laura Wardroup	<i>Vice President</i>
Denise Jones	<i>Secretary</i>
Annabel House	<i>Treasurer</i>
Pat Wehmeyer	<i>Member-at-Large</i>
Sarah Bacon	
Ross Bennett	
Charles Ferguson	
Jill Flores	
Melody Hunt	
Charles C. Oliphant	
Andrew Penns	
James Willeford	
Jo Ann Wilson	

STAFF

Morgan Paschal	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>
Cindy White	<i>Facilities Coordinator</i>

CONTACT US:

1174 North First Street at Cedar
Abilene, Texas 79601-5811

Post Office Box 3451
Abilene, Texas 79604-3451

 325-676-3775

 abilenepreservation.org

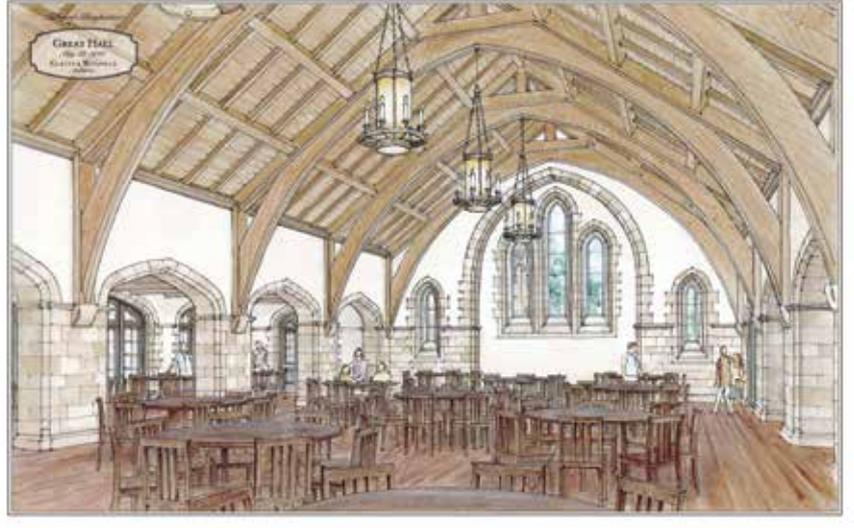
 info@abilenepreservation.org



ON THE COVER

The Church of the Heavenly Rest Episcopal at 602 Meander Street in Abilene. Gerhart Hall was recognized as the 2019 Institutional Architecture Honoree.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Architectural drawing of Gerhart Hall by Curtis & Windham

This section of our newsletter usually delves into the wonderful mind of the Abilene Preservation League's Executive Director, James Stuart. Jim would look back at our past accomplishments and envision our future efforts. When Jim passed away in August, I did not know how we would manage the first week without him, let alone the month leading up to the awards week. Jim had so many thoughts and ideas that no day planner or computer drive would have enough space to hold them all.

When the Board of Trustees met to discuss the APL's future, every thought centered on completing the work that Jim set out for us. We took it upon ourselves to create a tribute to him by working with the resources we had. The kind nature of those whose lives Jim touched aided us on this journey. We have managed so many tasks since our last newsletter that it amazes me how our crew could muster another issue filled with progress and hope.

In late August, the APL transferred the Swenson House to its newly incorporated non-profit, the Swenson House Historical Society. Many members of this group occupied past positions in the APL and I viewed this transfer as an opportunity to pass a restored asset on to trusted friends. This gesture continued the mission of our organization to preserve and educate our community about the importance of our historic heritage. Like so many rescued and restored buildings in the past, we handed this piece of history over to its new stewards to further preservation efforts.

September proved to be a difficult time as we coordinated multiple awards ceremonies and events. Without Jim at the helm, we needed to tread our own path to build and communicate the vision he had in celebrating multiple award recipients' contributions to Abilene. We began with a celebration of the Barnes and Williams Drug Store. Two days later, we honored the Heavenly Rest Church Episcopal for their recent restoration and new construction efforts. We then completed our celebrations in October when I presented the Historic Communities Honoree award to the Town West Neighborhood.

Our future remains bright as we look forward to working with many institutions here in town and across the state. In early November, the Abilene Preservation League will host Preservation Texas for their road show and Board meetings. Look for invitations to meet Gerald Moorhead, author of *Buildings of Texas, Vol. 2* at a book signing in the Elk's ballroom on Thursday, November 7th. The group will tour many historic sites as multiple organizations host the group around Taylor county November 8th-10th. We are also planning a mid-century modern scavenger hunt in the spring to bring awareness to this historic period in our city's rich history.

I thank you all for your support of this organization and to the staff who work diligently to fill the void in leadership that Jim left behind. Our search for the next executive director continues as we look to further all the great work the APL brings to this city. As always, we welcome your input and suggestions to improve and expand the scope and abilities of this organization to aid homeowners and businesses in preserving their historic sites.

Josh

Josh Black
President
Board of Trustees
Abilene Preservation League

A SPECIAL *Tribute*

JIM STUART

1949 - 2019

On August 14, 2019, the beloved, seventh Executive Director of the Abilene Preservation League, Jim Stuart, passed away unexpectedly. Jim brought a fresh, vibrant and infectious energy, which led many people to reconsider the important ongoing work the APL accomplishes in the name of saving a part of Abilene's heritage.



A native of Lamesa, Texas, Jim attended Texas Christian University and received his Bachelor of Business Administration degree in marketing/advertising from Texas Tech University. Jim led a highly successful career, including having co-founded the illustrious Stuart Bacon Advertising-Public Relations, in Fort Worth, with Randy Bacon. Jim received many advertising industry awards and marketing communications honors, such as the Professional Ethics Award from Schieffer School of Journalism at Texas Christian University and the Outstanding Alumnus of the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech University.

During his short tenure at the APL, Jim accomplished much and laid fresh ground work, having grown the organization's communications and public relations. A master wordsmith, Jim was famous for his beautiful hand written notes and ability to convey warmth with humor. Jim was a staunch preservationist and had many ideas to expand the APL, which he often described as "crazy," but he pursued them with fire. One such example was transforming the Heritage Stewardship Awards into the Abilene Preservation Awards. Although Jim did not get to see his idea come to complete fruition, he created a detailed plan which allowed the APL staff and board of trustees to complete his vision.

Let us honor Jim and continue to build on his ground work in promoting, educating and advocating the proper preservation of historic Abilene. In the words of Jim, "We've got ground to scratch and eggs to lay, so we can't tarry."

Thank you, Jim.

The Deed Transfer is Done

The Board of the Abilene Preservation League transferred the deed to the Swenson House to the Swenson House Historical Society Tuesday, August 20th. To celebrate, members of both organizations came together and munched on grilled hot dogs and homemade ice cream.



Q&A

LEAGUE
VICE PRESIDENT



Laura Wardroup

Fiercely loyal, gregarious, and a fixer, Laura Wardroup currently serves as the Vice President of the Abilene Preservation League. A licensed interior designer by trade, she recently lent her skills to the APL's Preservation Awards Keystone Event by decorating the dinner tables. Laura was born in Monahans and has lived in Midland, as well as, Peru, for two years. She attended Texas A&M University and transferred to the University of North Texas where she graduated with a BFA in Fine Arts. Laura enjoys old movies, yard work and being around water in just about any form.

Q: As a licensed interior designer, what is a big red flag when it comes to interior design?

A: The most dreaded words I hear are, "I was watching Fixer Upper and thought I could..."

Q: It's been said that you're an open book. Is there anything that people might be surprised to learn about you?

A: I cry at commercials, movies and every time I hear the theme song to *Brian's Song*.

Q: Which architectural style do you think needs to make a comeback?

A: I'm ready for contemporary to come back - I love the strong, bold colors and clean lines, which is pretty funny, because I like antiques too. I love the warmth of uncluttered country French. Antique accents with comfortable lounging furniture always says, "family."

Q: What is your favorite historical building in Abilene and why?

A: The Paramount Theatre has to be the jewel of Abilene, it's the forefront of what we've done historically. The stars and clouds still fascinate me. But I also think that Abilene is blessed with a great diversity of architectural styles - Victorian, Prairie Houses, Ranch Mid-Century Modern, Classic and even the old motor courts on South First. I love the Ponca Motel where the neon Chief stands watch.



ABILENE Preservation AWARDS

Expanding on its traditional Heritage Stewardship Awards luncheon, the Abilene Preservation League successfully launched the inaugural 2019 Abilene Preservation Awards. The brainchild of the late Jim Stuart, this multi-day celebration recognized and lauded the preservation efforts of Abilene neighbors, businesses and institutions in three categories: Heritage Business, Institutional Architecture, and Neighborhoods and Historic Communities.



2019 HERITAGE BUSINESS

On September 24th, the Abilene Preservation League recognized Barnes & Williams Drug Center at 701 Hickory Street for carefully caring for the façade or interior of a historic building, reflecting the ongoing spirit and identity of a vintage business. The celebration was complete with treats from Sweet Thyme Kitchen, a ribbon cutting with the Redcoat Ambassadors, which recognized 80 years of continuous operations, and an awards ceremony.

Barnes & Williams Drug Center was founded in 1930 in Breckenridge, TX by Mr. Jack Barnes and Mr. Paul Williams. In 1939, seeing the opportunity for growth, Mr. Barnes moved the pharmacy to Abilene, TX, making it the longest established pharmacy in the city.

The building which Barnes & Williams calls home was built in 1925 in the 20th Century Commercial style with Mission/Spanish Revival influences. The exterior walls are original stucco and the windows are original aluminum.

The pharmacy has long been tied to the loving hands of one family. In 1966, Larry Pittman purchased the pharmacy with his step-father, Sam Allen. Larry said, "One of the first pieces of advice that [Barnes] gave me when we bought the store in 1966 was 'Larry, don't ever move from this location.'" This advice has proven invaluable as the store has maintained its identity as a family friendly corner drug store. Jean Fanning, a longtime customer, came to the celebration and said, "My parents came here. Of course, I came here too." She went on to say of the current and past owners, "We're friends. They're my friends." In 1989, Sam Allen retired and Barbara and Larry Pittman, Sam's daughter-in-law and stepson, purchased the store, continuing operations. In 2019, Barbara and Larry Pittman passed operations on to their great nephew and his wife, Tracy and Jordan Talley.



An undated photo of Barnes-Williams Drug. Co. courtesy of the Abilene Reporter News





2019 INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE HONOREE

On September 26th, the Abilene Preservation League honored Church of the Heavenly Rest Episcopal at 602 Meander Street for the distinctive, uplifting and sensitively considered renovation and construction of Gerhart Hall. This celebration included a pleasant evening of docent tours, a delectable dinner, an awards ceremony and an unforgettable presentation on “Home” by Jay Moore.

Originally known as “the little stone church,” Church of the Heavenly Rest Episcopal was established near the corner of North Third and Orange Streets in 1883, only two years after Abilene was founded. In the early 1950s, with a growing congregation, the church made the decision to move to its current home, where the Legett Mansion formerly stood.

Easily recognizable as one of the most beautiful buildings in Abilene, Church of the Heavenly Rest Episcopal was designed in the gothic style by famed architect Philip Hubert Frohman. Modeled after the Washington National Cathedral, the majestic church building is of a grand scale and has a structural system of outstanding masonry work, a corner tower and exterior walls composed of Lueders limestone. Additionally, the church incorporated many parts of the original “little stone church” into its structure, including the original stained glass windows, altar, pews, credence shelf and baptismal font. Stones from the original building are found in the walls of the crypt and walls outside the chapel.

In 2014, reflecting the church’s continual growth, the congregation started a capital campaign fund to build a fellowship hall named after Rev. Willis Gerhart, affectionately known as Parson Gerhart, the rector of Heavenly Rest from 1920-49. A seamless blend between the old and new structures on the property was important and the stone quarry from which the main church was built was reopened to build the walls of Gerhart Hall. Curtis & Windham Architects designed the new hall and the Crowe Group contractors completed construction in 18 months. APL President, Josh Black, said, “Construction of this building and the subsequent adaptive reuse of the existing decades old campus shine light on the caring nature of [Church of the Heavenly Rest’s] members.”



Jay Moore



The Little Stone Church



The Church Nave under construction in the early 1950s

“Construction of this building and the subsequent adaptive reuse of the existing decades old campus shine light on the caring nature of [Church of the Heavenly Rest’s] members.”

Josh Black, APL President



Continued on the next page.



2019 NEIGHBORS AND HISTORIC COMMUNITIES HONOREE

On October 19th, the Abilene Preservation League recognized Town West Neighborhood, bounded by Graham, North Sixth, Grape and North First Streets, for lovingly preserving historic homes in a comfortable, compatible, caring community. Coinciding with the awards ceremony, the neighborhood hosted a Fall Front Porch Tour. This included a tour of 24 historical homes decorated for fall, entertainment from neighbors Lora Lynn Christensen, who skillfully played the accordion, and the Catclaw Boys, who put on a fine performance, as well as, a time of fellowship and dinner.

The sponsors and donors listed below played a vital role in the success of the 2019 Abilene Preservation Awards.

THANK YOU!

- The Dian Graves Owen Foundation
- The Barber Foundation
- Shelton Family Foundation
- Jeannette and Josh Black
- Peggy Beckham
- Borden Duffel PC
- Melody Hunt
- Pat Wehmeyer
- Laura Wardroup
- Curtis & Windham Architects
- Tejon Exploration Company
- Julie and Mike Denny
- Philpott Florists-Greenhouses
- Carrie and Russell Blaschke



Some are tucked away in downtown alleys and many are out in plain sight, but all of these "ghosts" of Abilene are treasured reminders of days gone by. Can you name the locations of these friendly "ghosts"?

Find the answers on the back cover.



the LEAGUE'S MOST *valuable* players

These good friends have renewed or established new memberships within the past year. Thank you.

1881 SOCIETY \$2,500+

Dian Graves Owen Foundation
Jeannette and Josh Black

RESTORER \$500

Peggy Beckham
Gay Beitscher
Charles and Kate Ferguson
Missy and Robert Willen

SUSTAINER \$250

Weatherl & Associates
Teresa and Ronny Bryant
Megan and Austin Butler
Becky and Mark Colman
Parkhill, Smith & Cooper
Vic and Carol Corley
Doris Miller and Don Fitzgibbons
Jane Hooker
Annabel House
Sharon and Tom Riley
DeAnn Smith
Dianne and Carl Young

CONTRIBUTOR \$100

Sarah and Michael Bacon
Jane and Russell Beard
Carrie and Russell Blaschke

Tammi and Rodney Briscoe
Wilma and Steve Butman
Mary Lou and Ed Conley
Reginald Crump
Sharon Daugherty
Julie and Mike Denny
June Estes
Julie and Larry Folwell
Christie and Gerald Galbraith
Lawrence and Mary Gill
Jane and Phil Guitar
Lee and Callie Hampton
Cindy and Robert Hanna
Ann Harwood
Kaye Price-Hawkins and Joe Hawkins
Judith Phaneuf and Mark Hoover
Melody Hunt
Jon Rex Jones
Craig and Kristina Jones
Denise and Van Jones
Cathy and Peter Lauve
Paul and Molly Lenker
Jeff Luther
Lindsay and Bill Minter
Mari Kay and Gary Morrison
Janet Payne
Audrey Perry
Jim and Mary Pizzorno

Constance Price
Glenn Ray and Billye Proctor-Shaw
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Scarborough
Barbara Schriever
Grant and Erin Seabourne
Bill and Lila Senter
Kaye and Dick Spalding
Dr. Paul and Gail Thames
Laura Wardroup
Dr. Donald and Pat Wehmeyer
Charles W. White
Randy and Jo Ann Wilson
Bill Wright

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY \$50

Susan and David Bacon
Randall Bacon
Yvonne and Ron Batts
Linda Bratton
Michiel and Dr. Clinton Cavuoti
Patty Collier and Jan Clawson
Kay Cockerell
Chester Dickson
Vicky Doss
Carol and Glenn Dromgoole
Marianne Fincher
Dr. Glen and Carol Hall
Janet Hardy

Diana Higgins
Virginia Holley
Paula Jones
Martha Kiel
Time Rice McClarty, AIA
Carol McClellan
Don and Janice Murray
Myra G. Newton
Jack and Sandie North
Byron and Louella Penrod
Mary V. Pritchett
Nelson and Sonya Quinn
Dr. H Miller and Diana Richert
Patricia and Charles Russell
Katie Scott
Scott and Michelle Senter
Ellis Smith
Frann Smith
John C. Stowe
Dr. Jimmy and Kathy Strong
Stan and Willys Treanor
Maureen E. Trotter
Louann Trull
Robert and Betty Weissinger
Dr. Rob and Angie Wiley
Larry Wolz

STUDENT \$15

Gayle Wilson

GENEROUS *Gifts*

In Memoriam

Wanda June Dendy

Laura Wardroup

Richard F. Bacon

Mrs. J. Neil Daniel
Chuck and Jean Kay Erwin
Mary Jane Harbison
Ann Harwood Interior Design
Lynn and Delores Lawhon
James L. Marshall
Jerry E. Matthews

Scott and Michelle Senter
Carolyn Strain
Jim Stuart
First Financial Trust
Geoffrey Webb

Jim Stuart

Susan and David Bacon
Michael Baskin
Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Cothran
Gaye and Jeff Davis

Carol and Glenn Dromgoole
Donald Fitzgibbons
Amy Guernsey
Larry and Mary Jane Harbison
Joy Ann Havran
Amy and Patrick Kelly
James L. Marshall
Ms. Roberta Marshall
John A. Matthews
Kade L. Matthews
Jo and R.P. Mitchell

Kinsey Farm Partnership
Marilyn Pippin
Evelyn J. Smiley, MD
Jerre Tracy
Pat Wehmeyer
Charles W. White

In Support

Patrons

Shawna Parmelly
Cindy Rhodes

Our apologies for any unintended error or omission. Please let us know if we need to correct our records.

Join the League!

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

My check is enclosed, made payable to **ABILENE PRESERVATION LEAGUE.**

CHARGE MY: VISA MasterCard AmEx Discover

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ CVC # _____

Signature _____

Enjoy the benefits of annual membership, and the satisfaction of protecting and enriching our community through historic preservation. And, APL members, please use this form to update our records.

Membership benefits include:

- Newsletters and notices
- Advocacy alerts and email marketing messages
- Advance invitations and discounts for League events
- Exclusive member-only lectures, tours and outings
- Discounts on event rentals at The Elks

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Restorer	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Family	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Preservationist	\$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributor	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/> 1881 Society	\$2,500
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer	\$250		

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

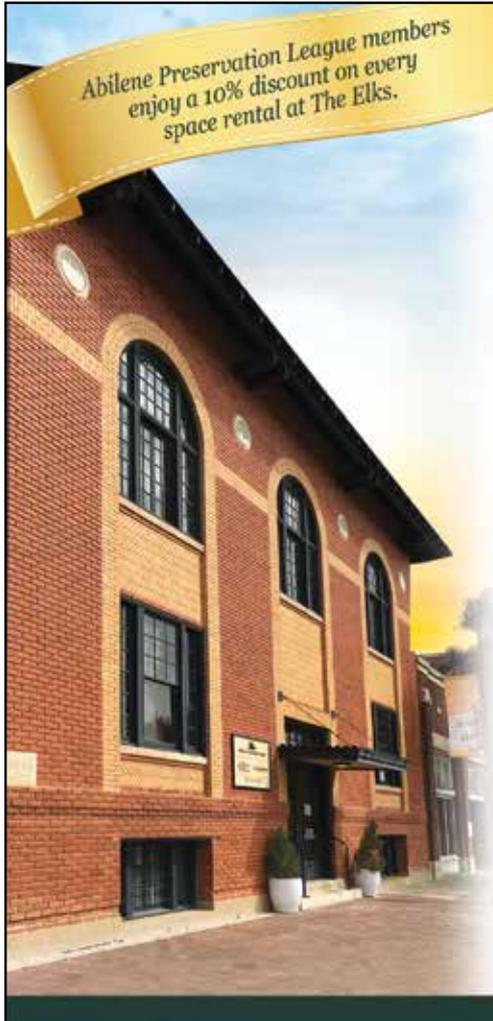
- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> APL Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Elks Arts Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |

Membership contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. APL is a 501(c)(3) organization.

UPCOMING *events*

Thursday, November 7th

Join the APL and Preservation Texas and meet Gerald Moorhead, author of *Buildings of Texas, Vol. 2* at his book signing in the historic Elks Ballroom at 7 pm.



Abilene Preservation League members enjoy a 10% discount on every space rental at The Elks.

THE ELKS ARTS CENTER

Exceptional Event Rental Opportunities

BALLROOM RENTAL

Includes piano, tables, chairs, bridal room, sound system, digital projector, WiFi, and set-up and take-down services.

- \$1,000 (up to eight hours) • Additional hours: \$100 per hour

BASEMENT RENTAL

Includes piano, tables, chairs, bridal room, sound system, digital projector, WiFi, and set-up and take-down services.

- \$400 (up to four hours) • Additional hours: \$85 per hour

CONFERENCE ROOM RENTAL

Available Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; includes digital projector, WiFi and access to kitchenette.

- \$90 (up to three hours) • Additional hours: \$25 per hour

abilenepreservation.org



**For more information,
call 325-676-3775 or email
info@abilenepreservation.org**

**1174 North First Street at Cedar
Abilene, TX 79601**