

Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) Awards of Merit Program

Overview/Background

The annual Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) Awards of Merit program began in 1993 with the presentation of one award. Since that time there have been 72 awards given to deserving Henrico County citizens and organizations. The purpose of the award program is to recognize individuals and groups for their efforts to preserve, protect and/or interpret and document Henrico county history. The awards are presented under one or more of the following criteria:

1. Commitment to saving Henrico historic and cultural resources.
2. Historic impact on the public at large.
3. Technical excellence in the application of restoration techniques.
4. Sensitivity in the design and incorporation of new elements and additions.
5. Excellence of a house restoration.
6. Excellence of adaptive use.
7. Appropriate development sensitive to the historical character of the community.
8. Heritage education including seminars, lectures, special activities, and publications.
9. Preservation plans to protect historic sites, structures and communities.
10. On-going care of buildings or sites whose owners have exhibited long-term commitments, and
11. Significant archeological surveys and reports.

The Challenge/Need for the Program

Since the establishment of the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) in 1990, the county has been actively involved in the identification, inventory and documentation of historic properties both public and private. HPAC is a 10 member committee appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. Administered by the County Division of Recreation and Parks, the committee is charged with creating and promoting public awareness of historic preservation and to provide information to interested citizens on the methods used in the preservation of historic properties.

With the on-going support and encouragement of the committee, the County has acquired and creatively rehabilitated, restored and readapted a number of historic properties that were formerly slated for demolition. Those sites include an 1825 brick tavern, an 1890s granite spring house, a 1902 two-room school house, a 1920s dairy barn, and a 1925 service station, to name a few.

The committee and the county leadership, knowing all too well the difficulty, expense and time involved in historic preservation of structures, agreed that an annual award of merit recognizing citizens and groups who took on this challenge, was in order. Past winners include business and subdivision developers, journalists, church congregations, educators, and students. With increasing business and residential growth, the rural landscape and way of life in Henrico County is vanishing and the need to document and preserve the history of the second oldest English settlement in the American, is paramount. This program is an opportunity, to create further awareness of

the county's rich past and also to recognize the individuals sharing the burden of this overwhelming, but all too important responsibility.

Description of Program

In July of each year, HPAC members present their nominations for the award. The committee reviews, discusses and votes on the nominees. There have been years, only 2, where no awards were given. However, there have been as many as 8 given in one year.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Recognize and acknowledge the County's appreciation of Historic Preservation efforts made at the expense and time of individuals and organizations with no other motive than to preserve local history.
- To honor these individuals and groups with a ceremony which includes a video presentation, guest speakers, presentation of award plaques and a buffet dinner reception.
- To notify the media about this award ceremony to create further recognition for these worthy recipients.
- To encourage other citizens, organizations and businesses to follow this example by making historic preservation a priority.
- To share with the local, state and national community the rich history of Henrico and the value the County places on its heritage.

In 1993, the first award was given to a property owner for the renovation and restoration of Walkerton Tavern, a historic site. Walkerton was constructed as a tavern in 1825, but was primarily used as a residence. Since 1993, 14 awards have been given for the restoration of residences by property owners. Business leaders in the Short Pump community were honored in 1998 for preservation of the Deep Run Schoolhouse, Short Pump Grocery Store and Short Pump Transmission. All three of these buildings were slated for demolition to make way for development.

Property owners have also donated land or granted right of way for historic preservation preservation and interpretation. One historian, archivist and author has been given four awards for his continued research, writing and publication of county histories. Two elementary school educators have been recognized for emphasizing local history through interactive and academic programs. In 2003, one church community raised money to preserve an African-American school house on the church property. The school became a space for Sunday school instruction, while preserving the original character of the structure and collecting oral histories from former students. The youngest recipient was a 5th grade student who went on to become an active member of the local historical society serving as the society's program chairperson.

Use of Technology

Staff works closely with division marketing and IT to create a video program highlighting the award winners. Digital cameras are used to take current photos of the recipients and their work. They are interviewed and this audio profile is used in the creation of the video script and ceremony program. The ceremony is photo documented and videotaped for distribution to the award winners and well as for archival purposes.

Cost of Program

Fabrication of Plaques -	\$ 800.00
Food for reception	\$1500.00
Invitations and Programs	<u>\$ 400.00</u>
Total	\$2700.00

All other production was in-house with the design, voice, and DVD production done by staff.

Results and Success of the Program

The Award program will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year. Over the past two decades the program has created a greater awareness of the county's history and the county's many contributions to state and national history. Many of the award recipients have continued to express their interest in local history by participating in the County local plaque and marker program. The marker program allows them the opportunity to share their historic site with anyone who visits or drives by their property. Another success of this program has been the strengthening of collaborative efforts between the county division of recreation and schools. These efforts include promotion of County owned historic sites as destinations for family excursions through a local "passport"

program. Another outgrowth of the awards program is the Historical Awareness Essay Contest for 5th grade public school students. This effort at the elementary age level encourages young minds to view history as important to present and future endeavors.

By recognizing volunteer historical organizations like the Henrico County Historical Society and the Association for the Preservation of Henrico Antiquities, the division has the opportunity to develop joint educational programs with these groups that can be offered free to the public. These individuals and organizations play a vital role in preserving the structures, writing history books, donating artifacts and saving and interpreting Henrico's historic landscape for citizens, tourists and students for generations to come. It is essential to recognize these volunteer efforts for the value they provide to society at large. Historic Preservation is an unremitting enterprise, but when the task is shared by many, the benefits can provide the foundation for a strong and cohesive community.

Lasting Program Benefits

The Award of Merit has been an important tool in recognizing all the outstanding contributions in the stewardship of local history on an annual basis. History is important because we can learn from the accomplishments and failures of the past. We also better understand today's values by studying the values of our ancestors. We come to these understandings through the preservation of the written record, artifacts, historical structures and landscapes.

Each year during October, these awards are presented during what is officially designated, by our Board of Supervisors, as Henrico History Month. Each year the

ceremony is photo-documented with extensive files created for each recipient and those files are permanently archived. Each year past recipients are invited back to be recognized again and to show support for current recipients. It is a program that continues to grow creating a group of contributors whose work efforts go along way to promote the quality of life for Henrico citizens and enhance the visitor experience.