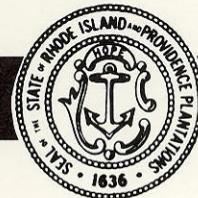


RHODE ISLAND  
STATE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
AWARDS

1997



RHODE ISLAND  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION  
& HERITAGE  
COMMISSION

## *Introduction*

*The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission's annual State Historic Preservation Awards honor individuals, organizations, and projects for their contributions to the preservation of Rhode Island's historic resources.*

*The Commission has named two awards in tribute to individuals who exemplify Rhode Islanders' commitment to historic preservation. They are the highest honors which the Commission bestows.*

*Antoinette F. Downing served in the volunteer position of Commission Chairman for twenty-seven years, from 1968 to 1995, and continues to advise the Commission today as Chair Emerita. She has contributed her time, her knowledge, and, most importantly, her vision to shape Rhode Island's state historic preservation program. At the same time, she has generously lent her counsel and support to numerous organizations and projects throughout the state. In her honor, the Commission created the Antoinette F. Downing Award for Volunteer Service to Preservation.*

*Frederick C. Williamson was appointed State Historic Preservation Officer in 1969. Today, he is the dean of SHPOs, having served longer than any other in the nation. His professional expertise in government relations and his skill in promoting effective state and local government partnerships are invaluable in advancing historic preservation in Rhode Island. When Mrs. Downing retired as Chairman of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission in 1995, the Commission members elected Mr. Williamson as the new Chairman. In his honor, the Commission established the Frederick C. Williamson Award for Professional Leadership in Preservation.*

*We salute all the recipients of the 1997 State Historic Preservation Awards.*

*Antoinette F. Downing Volunteer Service Award*



Ruth Joslin

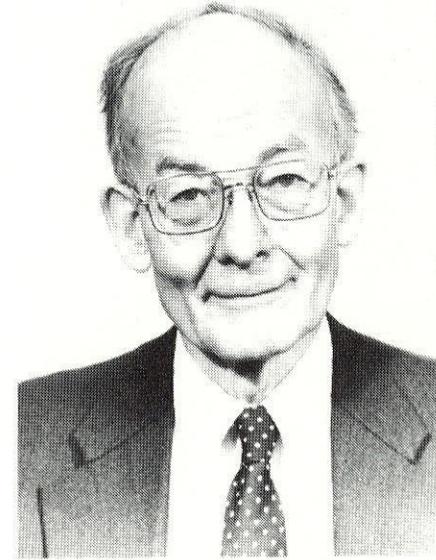
As founder of the Scituate Preservation Society in 1975 and its Past President, Ruth Joslin's personal vision guided the society as it developed into a leading voice for historic preservation in western Rhode Island.

Ruth's efforts grew out of her passion for Scituate's rural character and its lively village centers of North Scituate, Clayville and Hope Village. Forceful and determined, she worked throughout her life to protect Scituate's architectural, agricultural and cultural heritage from the forces of large-scale development and suburbanization.

An accomplished artist, Ruth's creativity, sense of family heritage, and affection for her community led to projects that engaged the citizenry. "Christmas in Scituate" and "Spring Country Marketplace" raised money for the Society and brought the community together. Other educational activities included vintage clothing exhibits, historical essay contests in the elementary schools, and tours of Scituate and historic sites throughout the northeast. Through her leadership the Wayside Gleaner Chapel on Gleaner Chapel Road stands today as the Society's headquarters.

Ruth Joslin's volunteer accomplishments are surpassed only by the example she set in achieving them. Her legacy lives on in the vibrant and cohesive community preservation organization she leaves behind.

*Antoinette F. Downing Volunteer Service Award*



William D. Metz

Not content to limit his involvement with historical concerns to teaching in the university classroom, Bill Metz has given years of volunteer service for at least a dozen local and statewide historical and preservation organizations. He has made state and local history more accessible to many Rhode Islanders both by knowing how to tell the story and by engaging others with his tremendous energy and warm congeniality.

The list of his achievements is inspiring: founder and president of the South County Museum, an institution devoted to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century rural life; president of both Pettasquamscutt Historical Society and Cocumscussoc Association; chair of the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities; first chair of the South Kingstown Historic District Commission; chair of the South Kingstown Bicentennial Committee; and founding member of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

A list of achievements omits, however, the zest and cheer with which Bill Metz gives his time and talent to so many organizations. "A nuts and bolts kind of guy," notes one fellow volunteer, Bill "has done everything and still does." Bill's enthusiasm for all he does is infectious and ultimately inspires others to follow his example -- if nothing else for the fun of it!

## *Frederick C. Williamson Professional Leadership Award*



Alan Leveillee and The Public Archaeology Laboratory

Fifteen years ago, when Alan Leveillee established the Educational Programs Department at the Public Archaeology Laboratory, public education was not a strongly promoted aspect of archaeology. Since then, Alan and the PAL have developed strategic partnerships, achieved scholarly excellence, and engaged the public creatively for the tremendous benefit of archaeology.

Successful archaeological projects demand leadership and creativity to forge strategic relationships and achieve high ethical and research standards. During one project, Alan and the PAL mobilized 200 volunteers and coordinated fifteen local and statewide agencies, educational institutions, and funding agencies to rescue a site threatened by private development.

Beyond innovative strategies at the artifact-recovery site Alan and the PAL have developed new opportunities to bring archaeology to the public. They have developed workshops at local schools and museums, walking tours of sites, public lectures, video-tape documentaries, exhibitions and displays, lay-oriented publications, and conferences, such as the Young People's Statewide Archaeology Conference.

Their contribution to enabling the Rhode Island public to enjoy the state's rich, diverse archaeological heritage makes the PAL one of Rhode Island's important cultural resources.

## *Historic Preservation Award*



Smith's Castle

Comprehensive conservation of Smith's Castle culminates the Cocomuscusoc Association's half century of stewardship of the North Kingstown landmark. The completion of the two-phase, three-year project has not only preserved an important early building but also generated significant information about the construction of this and other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century buildings.

Structural weakness after more than three centuries of use suggested two approaches: extensive rebuilding or careful analysis and selective reinforcing. In choosing the second alternative, the Association organized a broad-based building committee that included architect Clifford M. Renshaw, contractors Bob Major and Mary Turkel, structural engineer Wilbur E. Yoder, National Park Service representative Larry Sorli, and Association members. By "looking at the building through a microscope as we took it apart," as one member put it, the committee reached consensus decisions about stabilization and restoration that saved both original building material and money.

The results are striking. Structural reinforcement left original framing members in place and clearly demonstrates what is old, what is new. View ports that reveal otherwise hidden framing enhance the building's interpretation. Bright -- occasionally startling -- new colors provide a revised interpretation of the eighteenth-century palette.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



St. Anthony House

By providing food, clothing, and temporary shelter to a large inner-city clientele in a handsomely restored Italianate dwelling, St. Anthony House repudiates both urban blight and conventional thinking about social-service facilities.

Acquired by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence in 1959, the South Providence property housed diocesan community service organizations for nearly thirty years. The building was almost demolished in the late 1980s, but instead was selected as the site for St. Anthony House, a soup kitchen, temporary shelter, and distribution center for groceries and clothing.

St. Anthony House Director Nicholas Corsetti dedicated two years to repairing, repainting, and repapering the largely intact interior, featuring impressive original woodwork. When the Diocese suggested vinyl siding the exterior, Mr Corsetti undertook a campaign to restore the exterior with the same care as the interior. He obtained funding from the Champlin Foundation and ultimately from the Diocese to repair and repaint the still-intact exterior clapboard and elaborate trim. Windows were removed, repaired, reglazed, and replaced.

Today St. Anthony House welcomes clients into a warm and beautiful haven. The restoration is uplifting not only for the clientele but also for the neighborhood and the city.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



Bridge Mill Power Station & Museum

Hailed upon its completion as the "...finest water power electric station in New England," Pawtucket's Bridge Mill Power Station celebrated its hundredth birthday in 1996 with a new museum in its original generating room. While new generators hum efficiently one story below the old equipment, visitors may now tour the carefully restored machinery, view historic photographs and artifacts and experience the power of Pawtucket Falls.

Blackstone Valley Electric Company and volunteer Harold Foster devoted a year to developing the museum. The main room is lined with vintage photographs, posters, and architectural drawings that explain the history of the plant, while the original equipment gleams with fresh coats of paint. Tour guides explain the workings of the plant and how the machinery of yesterday, controlled largely by hand, differs from the automated processes of today.

The 1886 Bridge Mill Power Station, one of the finest buildings of its type in Rhode Island, now recalls the early morning of America's electrical age, a time when the country earnestly began to flex its industrial muscles.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



Candace Allen House

A large single-family dwelling surrounded by institutional complexes, the Candace Allen House (1818-1822) faced an uncertain future two years ago. Acquisition and restoration by Elizabeth E. Wheeler and Richard L. Wagner ensured the preservation of this prominent and architecturally significant Providence landmark.

The Benevolent Street mansion was designed by architect-builder John Holden Greene, whose handsome buildings established the character of Federal-era Providence and, in the words of architectural historian Talbot Hamlin, "...still make the hill around Brown University one of the loveliest sections of any American city...."

Descendants of the original owner bequeathed the property to the First Unitarian Church. However, the house was impractical for Church programs and financially draining. Put on the market, it seemed destined to become apartments or condominiums -- until the opportune appearance of Liz Wheeler and Richard Wagner.

Restoration tasks included extensive brickwork repointing, repainting, chimney repair, roof and downspout repair, and -- most dramatically -- the reinstallation of the balustrades on the roof and monitors. The new owners have not only retained the house's original use as a single-family residence, but have enabled Providence residents and visitors to see this important landmark as Greene designed and built it.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



Warren Preservation Society

Founded to promote and preserve the historic resources of Bristol County in general and the Town of Warren in particular, the Warren Preservation Society has achieved signal success in only nine years. WPS's founding philosophy exemplifies state-of-the-art preservation thinking: history and historic properties are integral to community identity and vitality, and broad-based involvement in historic preservation is both a means and an end.

A wide variety of activities enables WPS to engage the community through educational programs, festivals and special events, and public advocacy. Well-attended lectures present topics ranging from architectural history through marine archaeology and old postcards to whaling. Walking tours educate visitors, children, teachers, and public officials. Collections of photographs and memorabilia preserve documentation of the town's physical history. The annual "Warren On Wheels" festival celebrates the town's cultural activities—and the East Bay Bike Path—while raising funds for a community cultural center. Preservation advocacy includes monitoring public and private development and promoting historic-district zoning. The Society's activities are articulately and attractively advertised in advance and later chronicled in its bimonthly Newsletter. And all of this accomplished strictly through volunteer effort!

## Historic Preservation Award



Ewa Orzechowska

Few undergraduate students volunteer their time and abilities so generously and effectively as Ewa Orzechowska. As researcher, guide, curator, and project coordinator, she has raised the level of interpretation of historic resources both at her Salve Regina University campus and in the City of Newport.

Early in her career at Salve, Ewa discovered the lack of well trained student guides for campus tours and set out to fill that role. She began by researching the history of each of the university's historic properties and since the fall of 1994 has averaged ten campus tours per month. Her comprehensive history of every building on the campus is now a reference source for training new tour guides to carry on the campus tours after her graduation.

Ewa's volunteer experiences at Salve provided the springboard from campus to community. With the Newport Historical Society, Ewa coordinated volunteers to update the survey of the 1500-building Newport National Historic Landmark District. For the Preservation Society of Newport County Ewa has accessioned and catalogued thousands of decorative and fine arts displayed in their house museums.

Ewa Orzechowska, who will graduate in the spring of 1997, has made a lasting contribution to the identification and appreciation of Salve Regina University's and the City of Newport's resources.

## Past Recipients of State Historic Preservation Awards

### Antoinette F. Downing Volunteer Service Award

*Awarded to an individual volunteer preservationist who has made a contribution to community or statewide preservation through lifetime effort or a single significant project*

#### 1993

Carlton Brownell, Little Compton  
Marian Fry, East Greenwich  
Marjorie Matthews, Foster

#### 1994

Ruth Lebeck, Smithfield

#### 1995

Issac G. Smith, Jr, Westerly

#### 1996

Elizabeth Johnson, Pawtucket  
Helene Lee Tessler, Bristol

### Frederick C. Williamson Professional Service Award

*Awarded to a professional individual or organization that has made a contribution to preservation over a period of years or in a single significant project*

#### 1993

Irving Haynes  
William H. Jordy

#### 1994

Albert T. Klyberg

#### 1995

William D. Warner, FAIA

#### 1996

B. Clarkson Schoettle

*Past Recipients of State Historic Preservation Awards*

**1993**

Preservation Society of Newport County  
Kenyon's Department Store, Wakefield  
Burnside Memorial Hall, Bristol  
East Greenwich Comprehensive and Preservation Plans  
1258 and 1262 Kingstown Road, South Kingstown  
Crescent Park Carousel, East Providence  
Rose Island Light House, Newport  
Providence Preservation Society Children's Education Program

**1994**

Witherbee School, Middletown  
Memorial and Library Association of Westerly  
Nicholas Brown, John Carter Brown, Angela Brown Fischer  
West End Preservation Apartments, Providence  
Newport Army-Navy YMCA  
Elmwood Foundation for Architectural and Historical Preservation  
The Museum of Newport History at Brick Market House

**1995**

Rhode Island School of Design  
Southeast Lighthouse, Block Island  
Winsor Blacksmith Shop  
576 Broad Street and 39-41 Harvard Street, Providence  
John Hunt House, East Providence  
Preservation Society of Pawtucket Children's Education Program

**1996**

Slater Mill, Pawtucket  
Kit Matteson Tavern, West Greenwich  
City of Providence Preservation Planning  
Old Kent County Courthouse, East Greenwich  
King's County Courthouse, South Kingstown  
Shepard's, Providence  
Samuel B. Conant House, Central Falls

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