

RHODE ISLAND  
STATE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
AWARDS

2000



RHODE ISLAND  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION  
& HERITAGE  
COMMISSION

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## *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. 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 2000 State Historic Preservation Awards.*

*Antoinette F. Downing Volunteer Service Award*



Elizabeth Sargent Warren

Few individuals anywhere in preservation, volunteer or professional, invest the field with more infectious enthusiasm than Bonnie Warren.

Trained in architecture and urban planning, Bonnie became engaged in historic preservation through working with Antoinette Downing on Providence's College Hill Demonstration Study in the late 1950s. From that time preservation became her professional career, and more importantly for Rhode Island, it also became her passion. Beyond her survey and publication work at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission from the late 1960s until just a few months ago, Bonnie became involved in preservation in many other ways: as the owner of an eighteenth-century house, an active volunteer and board member of every East Bay historical and preservation organization, a public speaker, a teacher in Roger Williams University's preservation program, a citizen advocate in public meetings, and a fund-raiser, advisor, friend, and mentor to the many organizations and individuals that relied on her expertise and perspective.

Historic preservation in Rhode Island continues to benefit from the commitment, concentration, and energy that Bonnie possesses so abundantly and shares so generously.

*Frederick C. Williamson Professional Leadership Award*



John H. Chafee

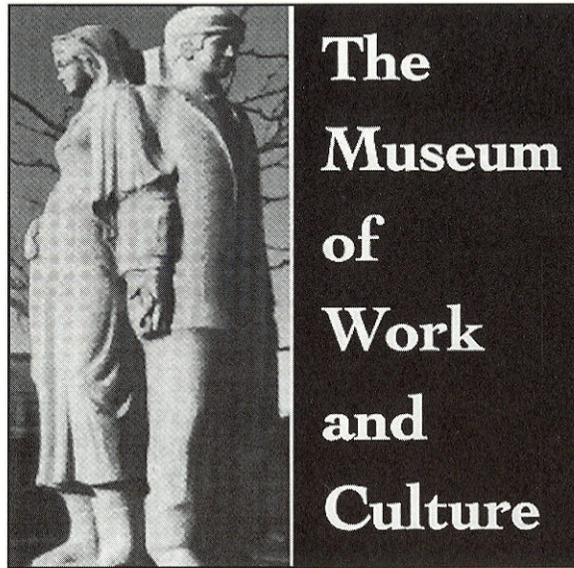
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Staff

Extending along the Blackstone River from Providence, Rhode Island, to Worcester, Massachusetts, the Heritage Corridor was established in 1986 to tell the story of the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. Since then, its staff has demonstrated remarkable skill in developing innovative programs for the corridor and its constituent members.

To tell the story of America's "hardest working river," Corridor staff created a valley-wide identity program of highway signs, maps, guidebook, and brochures; assisted in the restoration of key properties; developed three new visitor centers in Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Uxbridge; developed the Volunteer in Parks Program to augment the National Park Service ranger's interpretation of sites; integrated the corridor's management plan into state and regional planning efforts and provided land-use planning and design assistance to Corridor communities; developed projects to provide greater public use and access to the river, including a bikeway and canoe access sites; cosponsored a conference to explore effective and innovative ways to clean up and re-use abandoned mills; and developed tourism, including the popular excursion boat "Explorer," partially funded through the Commission.

The Corridor staff's multi-disciplinary activities and successful partnerships on local, state and national levels serve as a model in developing regional historic preservation and natural conservation projects.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



Museum of Work and Culture

Envisioned during Woonsocket's centennial celebration in 1988, the Museum of Work and Culture is a permanent location for the preservation and interpretation of the city's heritage. Important to the city itself, it is also a link in the chain of interpretive centers along the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Located in a former textile mill, the Barnai Worsted Mill (1915) on the Blackstone River, the 9000-square-foot facility contains interactive exhibits dedicated to the shared experiences of immigrants finding their places in America after the Civil War, specifically the lives of French Canadians who emigrated from Québec to work in the Blackstone Valley: a recreated Québécois farmhouse, a mill floor as it appeared ca. 1920, a triple-decker, a 1929 classroom from a Roman Catholic school, a recreated union hall from the 1930s. Beyond these reconstructions, the museum's exhibits address critical and long-ignored aspects of immigrant history, including the Sentinellist movement and labor organizing and strikes.

In addition to giving human faces and voices to the region's history, the museum authenticates and celebrates local history in a way that makes it significant not only to the museum visitor but to the very people who created that history.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



Aquidneck Island Land Trust

Using a regional approach to preserve the natural and historic character of the entire island, AILT represents a model effort of community planning.

When AILT was founded in 1990, Aquidneck Island had reached an economic, environmental, and preservation crossroad as it faced the onslaught of suburban sprawl. The new organization began a systematic study of the island's fifteen remaining greenways, large corridors of historic natural and cultivated open space that define the island's rural character. The Sakonnet Greenway was targeted for immediate protection. The AILT created a land-conservation plan and used grants, easements, loans, and other strategies to ensure protection of individual properties within the greenway. Today, more than 400 acres in all three towns of Aquidneck Island are protected and AILT continues to spearhead island-wide planning.

AILT's decisive actions have united government and business leaders in recognizing the threat of suburban sprawl on Aquidneck Island. AILT's Island Partnership of 16 local organizations and all three municipalities is a framework for improving land development and continuing conservation strategies. AILT's successful efforts reinforce the important relationship between the preservation of historic and natural resources.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



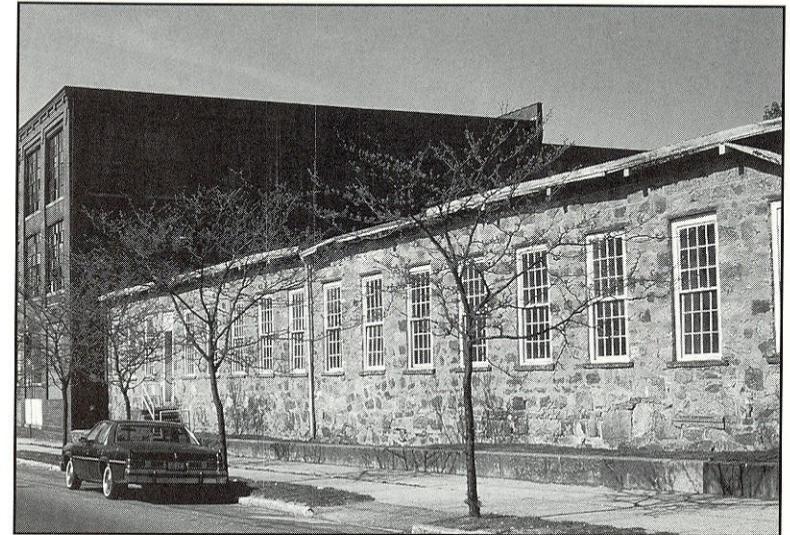
Neighbors Lane

Small-scale, out-of-the-way places are key to maintaining local historic sense of place. Neighbors Lane, extending one block from John to Williams Street, is the last remaining cobblestone-paved public street in the Fox Point neighborhood of Providence. By the late 1990s, the narrow lane was nearly impassable, with some sections missing all stones and in danger of being lost to asphalt paving.

Councilman Robert Clarkin approached the Providence Preservation Society Revolving Fund, Inc. to offer City Bond Issue money to restore the lane and asked the help of the Revolving Fund to oversee the project. Employing Searle & Searle, landscape architects, for plans and specifications, and David Meloni Landscaping to implement the project, the project added new river-stone cobbles and installed narrow brick sidewalks on each side.

The restoration of Neighbors Lane reminds us of the importance of attention to the often overlooked details of the historic environment and the valuable leadership of public advocates like Councilman Clarkin.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



Kaiser Mill Complex  
(National Rubber Company)

The ongoing rehabilitation of the Kaiser Mill complex into a variety of residential, commercial, and institutional uses contributes significantly to the vitality of the historic seaside Town of Bristol.

An industrial complex of forty-six buildings on an 18-acre site, the National Rubber Company complex developed between 1869 and 1907 and was Bristol's largest employer. When Kaiser Aluminum Corporation closed in 1977 it was given to the Town and remained vacant for a decade.

In 1991, the Town developed a plan for preserving Kaiser Mill in a manner that supported the surrounding neighborhood. The phased rehabilitation by the East Bay Community Development Corporation began in the mid-1990s with Elder Care I, 49 units of independent housing for the elderly, including a community center and medical suite; Elder Care II followed in 1997. This past year, EBCD and the Mosaico Community Development Corporation, developed four buildings for the state Department of Children, Youth & Families. Each of these projects has been awarded historic preservation tax credits, and Rhode Island Housing has provided financing and housing tax credits.

This cooperative venture represents a model for community planning and cooperative development to realize, in well-planned steps, the overall rehabilitation of a large mill complex.

### *Historic Preservation Award*

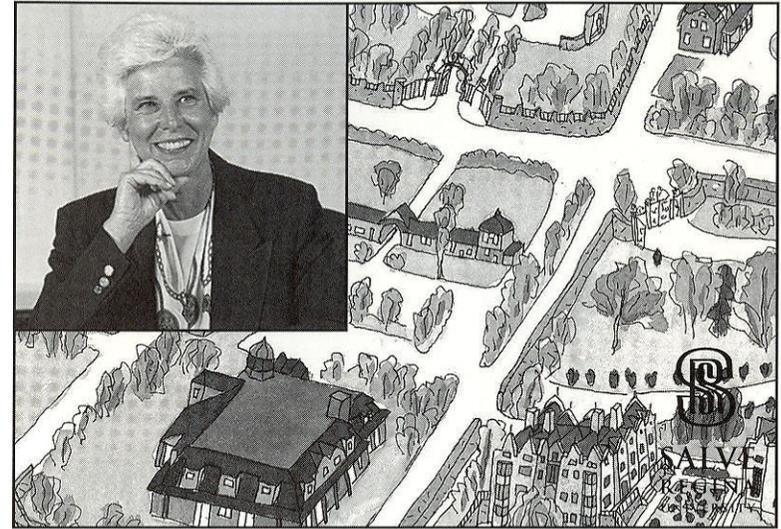


Center General Complex  
(State Almshouse)

A commanding curve of five buildings on the bluff above Pontiac Avenue in Cranston, Stone, Carpenter & Willson's rugged random-ashlar-and-brick State Almshouse was completed in 1890 to house 300 adults and 60 children. After nearly a century of use as a poorhouse, infirmary, and general hospital the Center General Complex (as it was known) was no longer suitable for health or charitable activities. Boarded tight, it remained vacant for almost 20 years. In the early 1990s, the state created a master plan to guide revitalization of the buildings and available land at Howard as a multiple-purpose state government complex.

The Department of Labor and Training began looking in 1996 for a site to consolidate many of its offices, most located in increasingly expensive rented quarters. Robert Brunelle of the Department of Administration had the vision to see the perfect match between the needs of DLT and the space available in Center General's largely open-plan dormitory buildings. Preserving the historic features that remained, this project transforms an institutional landmark from the nineteenth century into a state-of-the-art office complex for the twenty-first century at a cost far below that of new construction!

### *Historic Preservation Award*



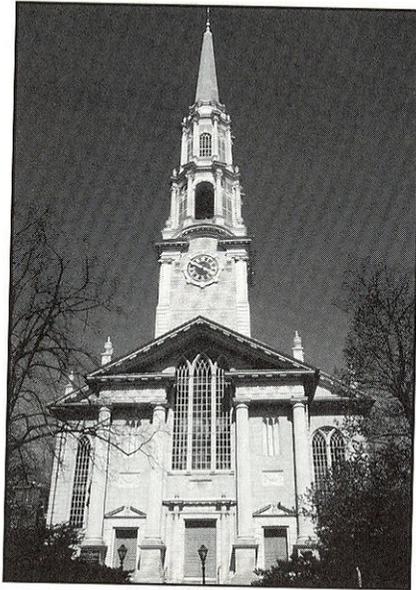
Salve Regina University

Since 1947, when it first opened its doors in Richard Morris Hunt's Ochre Court (1892), Salve Regina University has become steward to eighteen historically significant buildings spread across a sixty-acre campus in Newport. Through preservation and sensitive adaptation, Salve Regina has saved an entire neighborhood of nationally significant buildings.

Within the last six years, under the leadership of President Antone, the university has thoroughly integrated preservation into its institutional planning and programming. It has undertaken the restoration and rehabilitation of five of the late nineteenth-century summer cottages that house its activities: Wakehurst, Ochre Court, Fairholme Carriage House, Fairlawn, and the William Watts Sherman House. It has made use of the campus's historic resources for educational purposes, including self-guided walking tours of the campus, use of the historic buildings as teaching tools, and development of educational initiatives in historic preservation. It also has endeavored to integrate its preservation activities with the overall comprehensive plan of the City of Newport.

Salve Regina University, led by President Antone, demonstrates that good stewardship of historic buildings benefits the institution, its students, and the larger community.

### *Historic Preservation Award*



First Unitarian Church

The First Unitarian Church dates from 1816. When the congregation's earlier building was destroyed by fire in 1814, they selected a member of the congregation, Providence's master Federal-period architect, John Holden Greene (1777-1850), to build this edifice. Greene considered this his masterpiece. Remodeled in 1868 with rich Victorian colors and stained glass, it was restored in 1916 upon the building's centennial. Extensive reconstruction of the steeple followed in 1931. Fire struck again in 1966 and caused extensive damage to all but the east wall. The congregation chose to restore the building and selected architect Irving B. Haynes to oversee the project, and his office has continued to oversee work here.

An extensive exterior restoration of this masterpiece began in 1995. The project included lead abatement, wood consolidation and replacement, metal repairs, and complete repainting. The meticulousness of the planning, by architects Haynes de Boer Associates, and the high quality of work performed by E. F. O'Donnell & Sons typifies the long-term stewardship of the First Unitarian Church congregation.

### *Past Award Recipients*

#### **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*

**1999**

Ralph Emerson Carpenter, Jr., Newport

**1998**

Robert Merriam, East Greenwich

**1997**

Ruth Joslin, Scituate  
William Metz, South Kingstown

**1996**

Elizabeth Johnson, Pawtucket  
Helene Lee Tessler, Bristol

**1995**

Issac G. Smith, Jr., Westerly

#### **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*

**1999**

Charles Jeffers Moore

**1998**

Lombard John Pozzi

**1997**

Alan Leveille and the Public Archaeology Laboratory

**1996**

B. Clarkson Schoettle

**1995**

William D. Warner, FAIA

*Past State Historic Preservation Award Recipients*

**1999**

Fletcher Building, Providence  
Boyd's Gristmill, Middletown  
West Broadway Neighborhood Association, Providence  
Crompton Free Library, West Warwick  
Westerly Railroad Station, Westerly  
Mount Hope Farm, Bristol  
Washington Square Advisory Commission, Newport  
Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project  
Newport Fire Department, Newport

**1998**

Providence Art Club, Providence  
Kingston Railroad Station, Kingston  
Ledge Point Cottage, Newport  
Woonsocket Neighborhood Development Corporation  
Valley Falls Heritage Park, Cumberland  
Historic Preservation Program, Roger Williams University  
Rhode Island State House Rotunda  
Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport

**1997**

Cocumscussoc Association, North Kingstown  
Candace Allen House, Providence  
St Anthony's Home, Providence  
Bridge Mill Power Station Museum, Pawtucket  
Ewa Orzechowska, Newport  
Warren Preservation Society

**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

**1995**

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

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The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor  
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