

2014 Awardees: Collin County Historical Commission

Collin McKinney Achievement Award

Prosper Historical Society is an active organization dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of Prosper and the surrounding area. Prosper I.S.D. has graciously given to the society an area in their school board room to display historic pictures, documents, articles, clothing and etc, of the past. The Museum is manned by volunteers of the Prosper Historical Society. A traveling trunk about the history of Prosper is presented to 3rd and 4th grade students, and the society created a DVD about cotton. The society is working with Prosper upon a plan to preserve historic homes and develop a plan for a Veterans Park. Historical markers have been obtained for Prosper, the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church. Today, the Society is helping Prosper celebrate its 100th anniversary on April 26, 2014 with several activities. Restoration of local cemeteries is a major goal of the society. Bill Hays, president, has written two books on the history of Prosper. Prosper Historical Society is certainly active.

Excellence in Historical Education Award

Maggie Sprague was the founding director and board member of the Plano Conservancy for Historic Preservation in 2001. She and Russ Kissick have been directors of the Interurban Museum in Plano for several years. Maggie has been instrumental in raising funds, organizing volunteers and events, promoting historic preservation, researching and documenting Plano's history, providing programming and relevant materials working with Plano ISD to expand on classroom studies to provide an educational and cultural experience for elementary students, recruiting, training and supervising docents, overseeing the organization's budget, approving all disbursements, shaping and directing fundraising efforts, planning and directing special events, offering scholarships to graduating seniors, and developing interest in and maintaining collections of artifacts and photographic documentation of the Interurban and all aspects of Plano's past. Maggie has researched and published "Plano and the Interurban Railway." In addition she directed the creation of brochures about historic Plano and its cemeteries. Maggie Sprague epitomizes Excellence and Leadership in Education.

Leadership in Preservation Award

Austin and Clara Hill owners of Austin's Cleaners in downtown Farmersville knew their building was a historical treasure, dating to the 1880's. Yet a façade improvement project ended up being a major renovation success. The Farmersville Economic Development awarded the Hills one of their façade grants. Historic photos of the building were made available by the Rike Memorial Library and architectural design was provided by the Main Street Program. Guillermo Alvarez contractor of the project and past recipient of Leadership in Preservation Award restored the building which was a challenging project. This re investment in Farmersville downtown has improved the appearance of the downtown, and encouraged other building owners to follow suit.

Living Legacy of Collin County Award

Martha Newsom Bundy has dedicated her life through her volunteer time to preserving the history of Collin County for over 40 years. She, has served on numerous boards and

committees, but her greatest achievement was the preservation of the old Collin County Courthouse. Through Martha's tireless efforts and patient leadership of the Collin County Historic Preservation Group the old Collin County Courthouse on the square was saved from decay and destruction that started in 1979 when a newer county courthouse opened on McDonald. Martha Bundy spent long hours at meetings, constant convincing of people, making phone calls, sending faxes and emails and conducting late nights planning and early morning gatherings of volunteers and supporters. Finally a courthouse subcommittee approved the newest cultural plan in December 2003. The McKinney Community Development Corporation and the McKinney City Council in January 2004 approved the plan and funding was authorized. The old county courthouse is now restored, preserved and maintained.

Young Visionaries Award

Rebecca Miles has been involved with Heritage Farmstead Museum of Plano since she was 8 years old and has volunteered at all levels and areas of the museum. As a National Honor Society student, Rebecca has volunteered hundreds of hours a year at the museum. She has assisted with every special event the museum held, worked as a camp counselor on many summer camps, taken on leadership roles in the Museum Apprentice Program. Rebecca received her Girl Scout Gold Award by taking on a vital project at the Heritage Farmstead Museum. She not only repaired old and broken games, Rebecca also created new games for the education department to use for school tours, special events, and children's programs. She did an excellent job of recruiting other Girl Scouts to help with the game project. Hillary Kidd, educational director, said that Rebecca is a delightful and hard-working young lady.

Nominees

1. Chambersville United Methodist Church was organized in 1905. Since 1946 the church has hosted an annual Harvest Festival, which includes an excellent Thanksgiving Feast. Church members have built a larger community center, held a Decoration Day in May, renovated the old church building, and documented the history with three Texas State Historical Markers.
2. Heard-Craig Center for the Arts is a 114 year old home in McKinney and is a cultural tourism destination hosting visitors from around the world and has a collection of more than 400 pieces of fine art. Recently a fire suppression system was installed to protect the historic Heard Craig House.
3. Jane Huddleston is the co-founder of the Celina Area Heritage Museum. Jane's passion runs deep for Celina. Her volunteerism transcends to all; her time to her church, her community and her skills are done without material reward, her hours volunteered themselves are uplifting by a singular sense of purpose; to make Celina a great place to live and raise a family.
4. Jane Willard is one of the co-founders of the Celina Area Heritage Museum. She is a 7th generation Texas and has served on many county and city boards, including the County Park Foundation Advisory Board, the Collin Foundation's Board of Directors, the Celina Historic Preservation Board, and the Celina Area Heritage Association.
5. Allen Heritage Guild sponsored "The Civil War Comes to Life" the weekend of October 26 and 27, 2013 at the Allen Heritage Village. The Collin County Living Re-enactors set up a special camp, an actor gave Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, music from the Keltic Dead group was played, and a photographic display on the Civil War was shown. The Guild focused on commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War for the month of October and had guest speakers on the subject.
6. Catherine Fowler makes learning fun. Her active projection of how children learned in Collin County in the early days excite the imagination of the children who come to the Frisco Heritage Center's one room school house. In 2013 about 5,000 3rd grade children, teachers and parents came on tour and enjoyed Catherine's presentation. Catherine gives hundreds and hundreds of hours to education for the children of Collin County,
7. Judy Rucker has spent a major part of her adult life creating and supporting events, tributes, and exhibits that promote historical education about Collin County. She is an active member of the Prosper Historical Society, educates people about the history of Prosper in the museum in Prosper, helped bring about a traveling exhibit, "Past Pack" that included artifacts about the history of Prosper and wrote a book entitled "Prosper Texas."
8. William H.L. Wells Camp Sons of Confederate Veterans Plano Texas participate in the annual Memorial Day Observances held at the historic Decatur-Maxwell-Murphy Cemetery, Murphy, Texas. Commander Bray's men include Union and Confederate soldiers. The public have a chance to meet and talk with re-enactors after the program. Children especially are

- intrigued by the rifles, period dress and the loud cannon fire. This is an education not found in the classroom.
9. City of Murphy has helped the Murphy Historical Society on numerous projects. Most recently the city helped with the restoration of the Herring-Hogge Cemetery. This included additional funding, landscaping, technical support, and legal assistance. Without the help of the City of Murphy, the Murphy Historical Society would be less effective in preservation of the graves of the pioneers in the Murphy Family and the Herring-Hogge Cemeteries.
 10. Cindy Johnson has served as Executive director of the Heritage Guild of Collin County since 2007. Her main goal has been to preserve the historic buildings at Chestnut Square and educate visitors about the history of Collin County. Her belief about history being approachable has led to strong educational programs including outreach to local schools, trolley tours of McKinney's historical district, living history events, the Ice Cream Crank-Off, a Farmers Market and tour of the homes at Chestnut Square.
 11. Lolisa Laenger works endlessly recording, writing, speaking, and preserving the history of Collin County. She was a curator and still volunteers at the Heritage Farmstead Museum. Lolisa is the co-founder of the Murphy Historical Society and has written articles for the Wylie News, Murphy Monitor and the Murphy Messenger. She is a member, past President and currently Secretary of the Collin County Historical Commission. Under her leadership the Historical Marker Program was implemented and is chairman of the successful Collin County Cruise Committee.
 12. Robert Warren is a charter member of the Heritage Association of Frisco and has served as President and Vice President. Bob writes historical articles for the Frisco Style Magazine and has published a book of historical articles about Frisco and the Collin County area entitled "Now and Then." Bob is considered Frisco's historian and a frequent speaker on Frisco history.
 13. Shirley Schell was instrumental in performing voluminous research on the founding and development of Plano. She contributed immensely "Plano Texas: The Early Years" which was published in 1985. This book is considered by many as the bible of early Plano. Shirley is credited with providing research and the content for chapters on Postal History, Military Front, Mercantile establishments, Early Businessmen, and City Government. She wrote the history of the Ammie Wilson House at Heritage Farmstead Museum. Shirley also wrote histories about the First United Methodist, First Baptist Church, and Mason Lodge of Plano.