

City of Reno

Historical Resources Commission



1993-2008

Our city's historic structures-homes, businesses, commercial buildings, and schools-provide a direct link to the past through their associations with important people, events and architectural movements of the past. These "old buildings" reflect the character and values of the people who shaped our city and made it into the unique place it is today. Historic structures add to the value and character of their surroundings. They are non-renewable resources. In order to maintain the value of historic buildings and to preserve them for future generations, it is necessary to take deliberate measures to ensure their continued survival.





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Distinguished Service Award: Will Durham

For well over a decade Will Durham has struggled to salvage significant neon signs all over Northern Nevada. To salvage these signs takes persistence, ingenuity and personal expense. It is important to the history of Reno to once again have these icons of a past era preserved and more importantly displayed. Many of these signs are in protective storage but a recent success includes the reuniting of the Harolds Club Mural with the neon letters located above the mural and is currently displayed at the Reno Livestock Events Center. The Mapes Cowboys which were badly damaged



have been fully restored and are currently on display at the Western Folklife Center in Elko, NV.

His continuing efforts include rescuing the signage for the Liberty Belle Restaurant and Saloon the day before its demolition. Current restoration efforts include the Buffalo Bar and the Nevada Club sign which features Lew Hymer's iconic Bucky Buckaroo. Mr. Durham is always the first to inquire when a historic sign is placed in danger by neglect or demolition. More importantly he is not content with owning and storing the signs but instead does not feel his job is complete until they are once again on public display.



Advocate Award:

Judge Peter Breen

Judge Breen formed the Washoe County Courthouse Historical and Preservation Society for the purpose of restoration and preservation of the historic 1911 Washoe County Courthouse. Through his efforts the building's glass dome was restored, the building's exterior was cleaned and the original structure was earthquake-proofed.



Recently, Courtroom #1 (currently Courtroom #7) has been fully restored to its past grandeur. This courtroom was home to many divorce seekers who came to Reno to “take the cure.”

On March 12, 2002, District Court Judge Breen appeared before the Washoe County Commission to consider approval of a plan to restore the Department Seven Courtroom and to partner with the Courthouse Historical and Preservation Society to provide necessary funding. This restoration took approximately two years. Judge Breen is a true preservation advocate and is quoted as saying, “To preserve and remember provides continuity.”



Residential Award:

Isbell House – 1303 Mark Twain Avenue Steve and Laurie McLanahan

The Isbell House was built in 1939 by Wilmer Isbell. Isbell was the owner of Isbell Construction, which constructed many buildings in Reno. At some point, the company was taken over by Granite Construction. Henry Wright, a Los Angeles architect, designed the building.

Mr. and Mrs. McLanahan purchased the house in 2002. It had been vacant for 15 years and in addition to general deterioration, the house reflected several unsympathetic remodeling attempts. Over the past years, the McLanahans have been restoring the house to its original condition. The McLanahans have cared for and respected their home's historic value.





Non-Residential Award: Daughter's Café - 97 Bell Street Barb Giacomini

Block U, Lot 1 of the Powning's Addition was first deeded as unimproved property October 31, 1900. The structure which



would one day become 97 Bell Street was built on the property by Edger Shaver in 1902 and 1903. Mr. Shaver had paid \$500 for the property and borrowed \$1,700 from Pacific Savings, Loan and Building Company to cover construction cost.

The Bell Street structure remained a private residence until mid 2006, when the current owner, Barb Giacomini, adapted it for reuse as a vintage café. Some modifications were necessary for this new use. Additions to the structure included a wheel chair ramp, new dormer, and the rear porch was redesigned to support a commercial kitchen. The landscaping, exterior details and interior décor with minimum exceptions reflect the character of the original structure.

The conversion from residential to non-residential use offers an outstanding example of adaptive re-use in support of historic preservation.



Historic Landmark Award:

Bethel African-American Cultural Center – 220 Bell Street-Bethel Housing Development Corporation

Built in 1910, the historic Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church building has been on the National Register of Historic Landmarks since 2001. Until 1993, the building housed the oldest African-American congregation in the State of Nevada, established 1907. The basement of the church served as the official meeting place for many organizations including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and was birthplace for its first Nevada chapter in 1919.



On March 25, 2004, the historic church suffered severe damage from a major fire. With assistance from funds provided by the Commission for Cultural Affairs Grant Program, Bethel Housing Development Corporation, a non-religious Nevada non-profit corporation, sought to renovate and restore the historic church into the Bethel African-

American Cultural Center. Work on the initial phase of rehabilitating the building began November 1, 2006, with the final phase completed recently.



The Bethel African-American Cultural Center will be used to

display artifacts, exhibits and collections; as well as to serve as a venue for small plays, lectures, recitals and other cultural and educational activities.



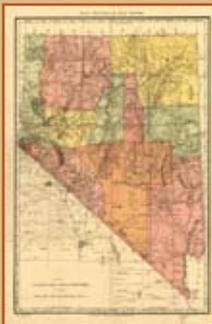
Historical Resource Award: Guy Louis Rocha, CA

Guy Rocha is the State Archivist and has worked for the Nevada State Library & Archives for more than 26 years. He is probably best known as a truth-seeker who is an activist for historical fact. Mr.



Rocha has represented the Nevada State Library & Archives on *CNN*, *CNBC*, *Nevada Magazine*, KNPB's "*House with a History*", "*Nevada Experience*" and countless other media outlets. He has a series posted on the Nevada State Library & Archives website titled "*Historical Myth of the Month*" which examines myths of Nevada in detail and provides the historical facts surrounding the myths.

Mr. Rocha played a key role in the Historical Marker program providing accurate narratives and marker locations. He was instrumental in the local placement of markers for the Jacob Davis Tailor Shop and the Johnson & Jefferies 1910 fight, among many others.

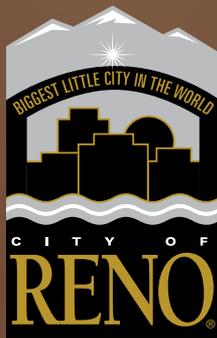




The Reno Historical Resources Commission (HRC) was established with the city's historic preservation ordinance by the Reno City Council in 1993. HRC members include design and preservation professionals and local citizens. The purpose of the commission is to identify and establish a list of properties with historical, architectural, archaeological, or aesthetic value in Reno. The HRC maintains the city register of historic places, which recognizes and honors structures that are important to the history of Reno and our sense of community. The HRC also acts as the official advisor to the City of Reno on matters relating to the historic preservation of cultural resources and buildings. The commission recommends to the City Council possible uses and funding options for historic buildings, places and sites, and policy and ordinance changes relating to historic buildings and sites.

Historic Preservation Awards

Since 1997, the HRC has recognized property owners and preservation advocates through the annual historic preservation awards program. For a complete listing of previous awards please, go to our website at www.cityofreno.com/index.aspx?page=750



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