

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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Arkansas Memories Project - Event

2010 Arkansas Preservation Awards
Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas
January 14, 2011
Chenal Country Club
Little Rock, Arkansas

Event Description

On January 14, 2011, the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas celebrated its thirtieth anniversary at its annual awards banquet, which was held in Little Rock, Arkansas. John Gill, past president of the Alliance, served as the master of ceremonies, and Senator David Pryor announced the winners of the awards. Theodosia Murphy Nolan was honored as the recipient of the Parker Westbrook Award for Lifetime Achievement, which William Nolan, her son, accepted on her behalf.

Transcript:

[00:00:00]

[*Introductory music*]

[*Conversations among members of the audience*]

[*Sound of spoon tapping glass*]

John Gill: Think this'll work?

[*Conversations subside*]

JG: This is a great night in the life of Arkansas. I'm John Gill, and it's nice to have you in Little Rock. Although if you look around, you probably will think you're in El Dorado. [*Laughter and applause*] Since this is the thirtieth anniversary of this organization, I'm going to ask all of the members present and past of the board of directors of the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas to stand, so that we can recognize you. All of you board members.

[*Applause*]

JG: Now you can see why we have three decades of legacy in this organization. As we present these awards tonight, let's bear in mind that Theodosia Nolan and her contemporaries led—laid the groundwork for the programs of historic preservation that these awards represent. Tonight's awards recognize hard work, dedication, time, and an effort to give to our children and our

children's children a better understanding of life in its fullest sense. Some say it's preserving history. Some says it's our heritage. Alex Haley called it "roots." Whatever you call it, historic preservation is an appreciation of who we are as a people, the good and the bad. Tonight's awards represent achievement inspired by a small group of pioneers who formed the association thirty years ago. This evening Senator Pryor joins me in presenting these awards. And while David Pryor needs no introduction, I think it's important that he be introduced, so that we can remember what David Pryor has done for us, especially in historic preservation. First of all, he himself is a winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award as was his mother, who was the first recipient the Lifetime Achievement Award. Seems like there's a whole lot of connection with south Arkansas around here. [*Laughter*] As governor he worked with Marjim, my wife, who at the time was president of the Junior League, for the preservation of Trapnall Hall for the state. Of the many bills he introduced into Congress, he was cosponsor of the amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act, which strengthened that act to preserve and to make preservation possible. And David Pryor understands that historic preservation is just—is not just about preserving buildings. It's about

preserving heritage. And to that end, he and Barbara established the Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas. And tonight we are all recipients and beneficiaries of that dedication because this event is being filmed by the oral his—the Pryor Arkansas Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas. Of course, you can't be governor or congressman or senator without making a little history yourself. So, ladies and gentleman, please welcome a man of history, the Honorable David Pryor.

[*Applause*]

David Pryor: Sit down. Thank you, thank you. [*Applause continues*] Thank you very much. Thank all of you. All of you. Thank you. What—John P. Gill. The P stands for Purifoy. [*Laughter*] And speaking of south Arkansas, the Purifoyos all originated in the red clay hills of Ouachita County. [*Laughter*] Not in Pulaski County but Ouachita County. The woods and the clay hills are full of Purifoyos. And from there, I think, he has derived his name and his fortune and whatever [*laughter*] from that upbringing. What he did not tell you is tonight for a very few moments, you will be having to look at and listen to a live, breathing member of the Antique Road Show, me. [*Laughter*] I was talking while ago with Parker. Barbara and I were back at

Parker's table, and we were talking about this room. And we were talking about a room full of people, very unique. There's no one here in this room tonight who came just to be recognized or to achieve fame or to acquire power or to make friends or anything. You came here because of your common love—our common love for this wonderful state of Arkansas. And that's what brings us together, I think, as folks who care and want to preserve. The first president of this organization, Parker Westbrook, is someone I have known—I hate to tell him this, Parker. I have known Parker for sixty years. [*Laughter*] I first met him, Jim Harris, in your father's office, Congressman Harris's office, when I was his page in Washington in the summer of 1951. I've known Parker for all of these years. He was the founding president of this Preservation Alliance. And tonight we see the fruits of his caring and his labor and his love. I'm going to tell you a very quick story about Parker. In 1966 with the help of Theodosia Murphy Nolan, with Bob's help and Bill Nolan's help and Charlie Nolan's help and everybody imaginable down in Union County, I got elected to the US Congress. [*Laughs*] In 1966. And we lived on 929 Banner Street in a little, small house. It was a rent house. We were getting ready to move to Washington in about a month, and the

election was over. And we didn't have a home in Washington, and we were sitting there on a Sunday night. Parker Westbrook was driving from Nashville, Arkansas, to Washington, DC, and he'd called that afternoon to say he would like to come by and meet Barbara, see our children on his way to Washington. We were sitting there Sunday night. She had never met Parker, but she was nervous because he was coming. She had heard so many stories about Parker Westbrook and his attention to detail and his memory and his love for history. It was eight o'clock. We'd put our three boys to bed, Sunday night, Camden, Arkansas, about to move to Washington. Barbara looked at me, and she said, "What time do you think Parker will be here?" I said, "Probably about ten or eleven o'clock or so in the morning or whatever." She says, "We've got to paint this living room." [Laughter] I said, "Pardon?" She said, "We've got to paint this living room." I said, "We don't even own this house. [Laughter] We're about to move out of this house in about three weeks. Why"—he said—she said, "I don't want Parker to see this living room looking like this." I said, "Barbara, it's Sunday night. The—we only have one paint store, and it's closed. And we don't have any paintbrushes. We don't have paint. Anything." She says, "Call up Travis Beeson at the paint store and have him

meet us down there." So I meet Travis down at the paint store [laughter]. By this time it's nine o'clock, and we get back, and we didn't have any paintbrushes. This is a true story. We just got some old towels [laughter] and dipped them in the paint bucket and raked them across the walls. And three or four hours later, it looked pretty decent in there. [Laughter] I want you—it looked good enough to have Parker Westbrook come in and meet Barbara for the first time, and they have been fast friends as we have ever—ever [applause] since, so. Well, what an honor it is to be here. And I've been asked to mention something. Save the date. May the fifth through the seventh in Little Rock is the Arkansas Preservation Conference. And all of us should be attending this, and I'm sure you'll follow on e-mail and what have you the events at the time and place, but those are the dates, May fifth through seven. I just want to say what an honor it is to be here and to recognize these distinguished honorees this evening because they have worked in the vineyards, and they are very, very deserving of our attention and our appreciation. And tonight I would like for you to hold your applause. I'm just going to go through these very, very quickly. Just a couple of sentences about—about each recipient.

The award for Outstanding Achievement in Preservation

Education is given tonight to Greg Herman, who's the associate professor at the Fay Jones School of Architecture, for the Jones House: Reconstruction and Documentation project in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Because of a death in Professor Herman's family, he could not be here tonight, but we wanted to recognize him, and his plaque will be properly sent to him and presented at a later time. The Honorable Mention for the Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Reser—Preservation Education is given to Lakresha Diaz for her work creating and promoting the Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery Cell Phone Tour right here in the capital city of Little Rock. Would you—and—and let me ask if you would stand please. Thank you very much. Please hold your applause. Well, just keep standing. [*Laughter*] That would be very good. All right, the award for Outstanding Service in Neighborhood Preservation is given to the Reed's Bridge Preservation Society in Jacksonville for programming that engages audiences around the Reed's Bridge Civil War site in Bayou Metro. The award is accepted tonight by Steve Shore, I believe on—no, [*laughter*] is that Steve? No, it's not.

DannaKay Duggar: Not quite.

DP: Okay, not quite. I can see that. [*Laughs*] On behalf of the Reed's Bridge Preservation Society, and your name is?

DD: I'm DannaKay Duggar.

DP: Good, DannaKay. Thank you very, very much. We're honored to have you here and to take this award with you. The Special Citation for Excellence in Public Policy is given to the City of Little Rock, Arkansas, Mayor Stodola, and Thomason and Associates for Little Rock Citywide Preservation Plan in our capital city. The award tonight is accepted by Phil Thomason and Mayor Stodola, I believe, jointly of Thomason and Thomason Associates. We're proud that you're here this evening. The award for Outstanding Preservation Reporting in the Media goes to none other than that one and only Rex Nelson for his wonderful reporting, blogging, and commentary on various aspects of Arkansas heritage and his advocacy for the Ray Winder Field in Little Rock Arkansas. Thank you very, very much, Rex. The Outstanding Work by a Craftsperson goes to William Looney Tavern project in Randolph County for meticulous restoration using the tools and the techniques that were faithful to the original construction of this project. The award is accepted tonight on behalf of the project by Jan Ziegler, Vice President for Development for the Black River Technical College. And thank you so much for traveling a long way to receive this award. The award for Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation is given to John French,

Southern Bancrop—Bancorp Community Development Corporation, for rehabilitation of the St. Louis Federal Reserve Building and development and the eStem Charter School in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas. The Honorable Mention for this award, Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation, goes to the Entergy Corporation and Jerry Holland of Cromwell Architect Engineers for careful attention and detail appropriate materials in the rehabilitation of the Entergy building, historically known as the Arkansas Power and Light Building in Little Rock, Arkansas. And accepting tonight is Dave Ingram of Entergy. We very much appreciate your presence and your fine work there. Excellence in Preservation through Restoration for a large-scale project goes to Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects for faithful restoration of the Washington County Courthouse in Fayetteville, Arkansas. And accepting the award for Polk Stanley Wilcox is John Dupree, the project Arkansas. John, thank you very, very much for your fine work. The award for Excellence in Preservation through Restoration in a small-scale project is given to state Representative Sheilla Lampkin and Bob Ware for restoring and community engagement around the Selma Rosenwald School in Drew County, down in Monticello, or near Monticello.

Representative Lampkin accepts the award on behalf of the

project. Thank you so very much. The award for Excellence in Personal Projects goes to H.T., known as Harry Truman, and Linda Lou Moore for their rehabilitation of the National Bank of Commerce Building downtown Paragould, which houses Harry Truman Moore's law office and apartments. Thank you so much. The award for Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Advocacy is given to John Wheeler and to Bill Hawkins for their tireless work in Camden, Arkansas, in preserving and promoting historic Camden neighborhoods. Thank you. And you know that is dear to *my* heart. [*Laughter*] The Outstanding New Construction in a Historic Setting award is given to the Hillcrest Kroger store, where I was early this morning [*laughter*] in Little Rock, for excellent compatible design of a commercial building in Little Rock's historic Hillcrest neighborhood. The award is accepted by the store manager, Lisa Yates. Thank you so much for that beautiful store. The Ned Shank Award for Outstanding Preservation Publication goes to Mary Kwas for her fabulous book on *Digging for History in Old Washington*—old Washington, Arkansas. She could not attend this evening, but this award will be sent to her. And the final award, the award for Excellence in His—in Heritage Preservation is given to the City of Dumas for the Gospel Institute Master Plan for interpretation of gospel

music history in the historic Pickens Baptist Church. And accepting the award tonight for the folks down in Dumas is Don Livingston. Don, thank you so much for coming. Ladies and gentlemen, let's give all these folks [*applause*] a big round of applause. Thank you, John.

[*Applause continues*]

[00:18:35] JG: Isn't it amazing what people like Theodosia Nolan, Parker Westbrook, and others started? It is amazing to me to see so much done by so many people in so many places in this state that are dedicated to preserving our heritage. I hope you will take notes on what others have done. It might give you an idea or two, and there's plenty of room in this state for a whole lot more preservation. A lifetime achievement, as the words suggest, means spending one's life in the worthy pursuit of good. Tonight's honoree, Theodosia Murphy Nolan, captivizes that pursuit. She epitomizes that pursuit. As you will see in a moment, she has a reputation for preservation that far, far beyond El Dorado, Arkansas. This award is given in the name of Parker Westbrook, who called the organizational meeting of this organization and inspired the Alliance and was the founding president. And it is fitting that the award is given in his name, especially since he endowed it. [*Laughter*] Parker wrote this

about our honoree, "From the very beginning of the Alliance's establishment, Theodosia Murphy Nolan was involved in the historic preservation movement from the beginning. Theodosia has been one of the premiere and steadfast supporters of preserving our cultural and architectural heritage. Theodosia has been with us all the way." One of the original group that met with Parker and others to discuss this organization was Roger Giddings, who at the time was a superintendent of the Hot Springs National Park. And he wrote a nice regret that he could not be here, and he said in part, "What a fitting tribute to a wonderful lady. My occasions to south Arkansas were always enhanced, as they were for everyone else, as a result of her knowledge and her dedication and her help to preserve, appreciate, and enjoy the effects"—that's an interesting term—"to enjoy the effects of preserving Arkansas history and especially that piece of history down her way. When I met with her, I had been—I knew because she said that she couldn't be here tonight. [Clears throat] So I said, "Well, Mrs. Nolan, would you do me a favor?" She said, "Yes, what is it?" I said, "Would you write a letter to your grandchildren about the importance of preserving history?" And she did. It's a long letter. It's very personal. But I want to share a little of it with you. "The history

part is the key. The restorer or the residents are conserving a part of history. A home, old or new, shapes our philosophical outlook. It needs to be appreciated and used. I recall an instance when my son, Bob, was about twelve years old. He was lying on the sofa in the living room reading a book. Because the sofa had just been recovered, I scolded him. 'Bob, for goodness sake,' I said, 'don't read on the living room sofa.' [*Laughter*] He replied, 'Well, then what's the sofa for?' [*Laughter*] I thought about it for a minute and told him he was exactly right. 'Enjoy your book.' This is why I believe it is important to use and enjoy our historic love, not only to preserve it." Mind you, this is a letter to her grandchildren. "Historic preservation is not only important because we live in these homes but because of the pleasure it gives people to actually to see our homes and their history. Think of what a feast of the eyes it is seeing a beautiful, small country church in numerous villages across America. And so in closing, dear grandchildren and great grandchildren, maybe this letter will help in letting you see how important historic preservation is to me. Much love, Dosia."

[Theodosia Murphy Nolan video begins 00:24:00]

Bill Cook: I have known [*music begins playing*] Mrs. William Nolan all my life. The closer I got and the more I knew Dosia,

the more I realized how she made the life experience for all of us, as she has with her family, a better place for her concern for historic preservation.

Tom Whitehead: We certainly consider Theodosia Murphy Nolan a continuing part of the tradition of strong-willed women that have had some association with the Cane River area of Louisiana during the past two hundred fifty to three hundred years.

Peter D. Tattersall, Jr.: I just want to say how—how proud we are of our grandmother. She's got twelve grandkids. She is truly a matriarch in every sense of the word.

BC: I, for several years, have considered Theodosia as being the true lifetime achievement in preservation not just in Arkansas but throughout the South.

Theodosia Nolan: I didn't know that it was actually historic preservation. But when my mother took me to the tours in Natchitoches and Natchez, Mississippi, we went every spring when they had the tour. And I was fascinated. And then in Natchitoches, actually, it was my grandfather's house. And I used to visit there when I was a little girl. And as I got older, I started looking around at the house, and my aunt took—took wonderful care of it. And it was beautiful, beautiful faux bois

doors, and I thought this house is so wonderful, but I would do this, and I would do that. Even when I was twelve years old, I was thinking what I would do to that house if I had anything to say about it, you know.

TW: The spirit of preservation to me is more than just bricks and mortar. To me a better, broader term is stewardship. The concept that preservation is really preserving the past now. Stewardship to me means preservation now but also for the future. You're planning ahead for what's being done today to last a lot longer.

TN: Cherokee, my grandfather bought it from the French family in 1870. In 1837—it's the first record we have, first deed we have. And the architects that have been there, been up in the attic, they say that it was built much earlier than that, probably between 1800 and 1810. But it was very simple. The three barns are still there, and the barn is older than the house. And they made that Civil War picture, the horse soldiers was—some of the scenes were around that barn. We have a farm on the Mississippi between Lake Village and Tallulah. It's a wonderful place, and there is a—a part of the property is called El Dorado Plantation, and there's an enormous Indian mound just right in the middle of a cotton field.

- BC: There's a lot to be said about Theodosia as the preservationist. But there wouldn't be preservation if it wasn't for her involvement in the arts, her work on the Arkansas Arts Council, her continued giving, the family home place that was designed by Charles Thompson. She was very influential in giving of her time, her efforts, and her money to the preservation of the John Newton House, which was built between 1845 and 1850.
- TN: It's almost—it's almost just self-explanatory, you know. That it's just important to preserve these places you live in and own, buildings that you're interested in. It's just very important.
- BC: She has always been there, and—and thirty years ago when I became involved with historic preservation in Arkansas, I was told, "Call Theodosia Nolan and ride with her to the first annual meeting for the Historic Preservation Alliance."
- PT: All the work she's done these—they're not just houses here—Cherokee. They're—they're homes. And—and they're so many—if the walls could talk, it would be fascinating. She took me and my cousins to Cherokee since—literally since the cradle.
- TN: Well, I have a little five-year-old grandson who's very curious, a little precocious, and he would listen to everybody giving tours in the house, and he'd walk around, and if they would describe an object, he would hold it up. And he told the people, they were

starting up the steps, and he said, "Excuse me." I said, "Well, Davis, what are you going to do?" I said, "Don't be impolite." He said, "Excuse me." He slapped the wall. I have left the bousillage plain, so people could see what it looked like. He said, "You think this is concrete, don't you?" He said, "It's not. It's not concrete. It's bousillage."

TW: Well, the efforts of Theodosia to make Cherokee not only a place of today in preservation but the concept of preserving it for future generations. That insurance that what she is doing today is not just for today but is for the future. The idea of the stewardship is what makes a Cherokee experience to be so special. And Theodosia Murphy Nolan to be truly a treasure, maybe of Arkansas, but we certainly think she's a treasure of Cane River and Louisiana as well.

[Music continues to play]

[Video ends 00:31:10]

[Applause]

Frances Ross: A treasure to the state and to the region and here to accept the award, the Parker Westbrook Award for Lifetime Achievement, *[clears throat]* for his mother is William Nolan.

[Applause]

William Nolan: Thank you, Frances. Set this. First of all, thank you, Bill Cook and Peter Tattersall and Tommy Whitehead, for that fabulous acting job in the movie. [*Laughter*] We really appreciate it. You know wouldn't it be wonderful to be ninety-three and to be admired and loved like Theodosia Nolan? It's almost unbelievable. Theodosia is doing relatively well. She's ninety-three years old, and she really wanted to be here tonight, but she just couldn't quite do it physically. But one of the last things she told me was to be sure and send her love to everyone in this room. If she were here, I think the first thing that she would do would be turn to Frances and John in the Alliance and say, "Thank you very much for the honor," and she wouldn't forget Catherine Johnson, who worked so hard to make this evening successful. But all the time she would be thinking, "Why all the fuss about me? What have I ever done to be recognized?" But as we know, that's Theodosia Nolan. She would also thank everyone in this room who's taken time out of their lives to come tonight and to support the cause of historic preservation. And on a personal note, I look out and see many friends of mine, and Bob and Charlie Nolan have done the same thing. And we personally appreciate all of you coming tonight.

And while this is not about El Dorado tonight, another thing

Theodosia would do would be to thank those from her part of the state that are coming after her with the torch of historic preservation, carrying on what she and others started. And many of them are here tonight. We have Richard and Vertis Mason, who were recipients of this very same award by you guys a number of years ago. There's Bill Cook. There's Edwin and Diane Alderson. Many, many more. Doctor Daniels and his wife Camille are here. And these people are here to carry that torch forward. And she wouldn't forget those wonderful companies headquartered in south Arkansas that mean so much to our community, and many of them are here tonight. Okay, let's—let's change the tone a little bit. We're gonna have a quiz, short quiz. Theodosia is a beautiful name, and how many in this room know where the name came from and what it means? Raise your hand if you do. Chip, what, tell us.

[Chip Murphy answers in the background]

WN: Chip Murphy is absolutely correct. The name is a Greek word meaning "gift from God," and if there was ever a person that that name applied to, I think we could all agree that it's Theodosia. But you know this stately and magnificent woman that we just saw on film we all know today, she was not always like that. *[Laughter]* In fact, when she grew up and, of course,

I wasn't there, [*laughter*] I was told that she was always different—that she was a trendsetter, that she had an adventurous spirit—and would give me an example. The different part—she was raised during the roaring twenties when anything went, when jazz and swing and pop music were alive and all of the communities, and could she listen to that? No. Basically from the time she was born she was raised on classical music, on Brahms, Beethoven, and Mozart. And even before she realized it, she had been given her first lesson in history and how important it is and how meaningful it is. Adventurous? I—I think you would say so. When she was twelve years old, she drove her mother, her brother, and her sisters from El Dorado all the way across Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado to Colorado Springs in an old open-air Lincoln touring car. [*Laughter*] And just think—now that was 1929. [*Laughter*] And—and just think what your daughters and granddaughters are doing now at twelve. Even better than that, when she was sixteen, she learned to fly and soloed in an old World War I open-cockpit biplane airplane. [*Laughter*] And for about three, four years, she flew all over the south in her own plane, which was a Fairchild 24, until she met William Nolan, who swept her off her feet, married her, and pun intended, clipped her wings.

[*Laughter*] She took her first trip to Europe about sixty years ago when the rubble of World War II was still evident in many of the places that she visited. For you history buffs, she crossed on the original Queen Elizabeth, which has just been reconverted back from a troop ship to a passenger carrier again. And she returned on the fastest ship at that time to ever sail the seven seas, the USS United States. And for the next sixty years, she basically traveled constantly to the four corners of our globe with whoever she could convince to go with her—family, friends, tours, you name it. And it was certainly during this—this time period that she developed and refined her feeling of the importance of history for all of us, whether we know it or not, and why it's important to preserve it. Just a couple more thoughts that I'd like to leave you with. If you think about the time when she grew up, there weren't many options available to women. I think had she been born and raised forty, fifty years later she probably would have been a high-powered corporate lawyer. Or maybe an investment banker. Or, David Wood, maybe an executive officer of the company that she founded, Murphy Oil Corporation. She founded the company with her brother and her sisters. But those avenues were mostly closed for her that time as they were for other women. And really it's

been very fortunate for us because she was able to turn her attention to such fields as historic preservation. And just as an aside, there were others like her in south Arkansas and El Dorado that did the same thing. One was her dearest friend, Johnnie Murphy, Chip's mother, and the other was a person known to most of us, Bibba Pruet. They did basically the same thing. There—one final thought that I would like to leave you with about Theodosia and having been honored to see and visit with her almost daily, and it's sort of a personal thought. But to me if anyone has ever captured the essence of aging gracefully, it would be Theodosia. And if we all think about it, the human condition's really not all that great at any age and especially if you're ninety-three years old. You have to learn to cope with a lot. But to me, Dusia, as you've heard her called, that's a nickname given her by her grandchildren decades ago, has truly found the secret. And this is it in my view: she never thinks about herself. She never thinks about her aches and pains, which are many, unless she's really forced to do it. She's always looking outward. She's always looking forward. She's always thinking of others and what she can do for them. And it might be a kind note written to a friend in that elegant longhand that she still has. Or it might be a container of homemade soup

delivered to a shut-in. Or it might be a few dollars given to, discreetly, to someone in need. And John and Frances, probably, certainly, surely her thinking about and planning her next historic preservation project. So that's the Theodosia Nolan of today. And from all of us who have been fortunate enough to know and love her for so many years and whose lives have been blessed by her, we just say for her to the Alliance thank you very much.

[Applause]

JG: Bill, thank you very much. Tell your mother that we missed her. Tell your mother that we're grateful for what she's done. Tell your mother we're thankful for the example that she has given all of us. And when we leave here tonight, friends, take with you a little bit about what you've learned tonight about how to be a great leader and how to be a great person. The education for me in this whole process has been pretty good, too, because I didn't realize until I saw the film that you saw what Tommy Whitehead said. And I want you to think about that as well. That this whole concept of preservation is about stewardship. It's about holding what is dear and keeping it for the next generation. I also want you to tell your mother that—what Frances Ross has already said. That, because of your

generosity, because of your presence here tonight, and because of Theodosia Nolan, the Alliance has established the Arkansas Preservation Foundation because of Mrs. Nolan and because of you. And that let's this organization go to new heights to be able to do new things. Let me tell you about one of the new things this organization did this year, which is a leap out from where we've been. We actually took title to a piece of property and then turned it over to a developer which will very soon be open on Main Street, Little Rock. That's the kind of thing that is new in historic preservation, particularly for an organization like this. And that's what I think you'll see more of, and I hope you'll be a part of it. Now I've said this before, and I think it embarrasses Vanessa. But I'm going to say it again. Vanessa McKuin is the heart and the soul and the face, the pretty face, of historic preservation in Arkansas. In just a short period of time, she has raised the level of awareness of historic preservation and for the need of preserving our heritage. In just two years, little over two years, she has taken the reigns of this organization to new highs while at the same time training a new husband. [*Laughter*] This job requires her to step into city halls and other places where other people have sometimes forgotten about preserving our heritage. And these are sometimes hostile

environments. When you start talking about "don't tear down that building," you can ruffle some feathers. But Vanessa is polite and handles it with courage and determination. And when you work closely with someone as I have for the last year, you get to know them pretty well. And I can tell you that Vanessa loves history. Vanessa loves her work, and Vanessa loves this organization. This meeting would not be complete without hearing from our leader. And it is my very great privilege to introduce someone I admire and respect, the executive director of the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas, Vanessa McKuin.

[*Applause*]

Vanessa McKuin: Thank you, John. Wow, this is a big crowd.

This is really exciting [*laughs*]. I want to start by thanking each of you so much for being here tonight and for sharing in this very festive celebration of Theodosia, of the wonderful projects that we've seen tonight, and of the beginning of our thirtieth anniversary of—of preservation in Arkansas. There are a lot of people that I need to thank, and you've heard a lot of—a lot of thank-yous, and that's because there were a lot of people that have been involved with this, with making this event possible. I want to thank Catherine Johnson of Catherine Johnson and

Associates for her tremendous work in helping plan this event. I also want to thank my administrative assistant, Leslie Fisher, who is fairly new to the Alliance and kind of jumped right in, and she's done a tremendous amount of work in—kind of in the back wings. I also want to thank W. L. Cook, who I know as Billy, my former Sunday school teacher [*laughter*]. Bill Nolan and Susan Clark of El Dorado, and thank you so much to the Murphy-Nolan family. It's really been wonderful to—to be able to engage with your family and to get to visit with—with Theodosia, with your mother, aunt, grandmother, whatever she is to you. You're a wonderful family, and we thank you for—for letting us celebrate Theodosia. And thank you so much for your generosity. As—as Frances and—and John have mentioned, we are able to start the Arkansas Preservation Foundation because of this event. And it's just a tremendous milestone in the—in the next phases of the Alliance. We want to thank you. Thank you, Ethel Goodstein-Murphree, who couldn't be here tonight because of illness. But she was the elect—award selection committee chair. And to Aaron Ruby for the beautiful slideshow that you saw. Cary Tyson and Patri—Patricia Blick for helping put together this wonderful program that you see on your tables. And to David Pryor and Frances Ross and John Gill, thank you for lending your

voices and your wonderful faces to this event. Your—your presence here really makes—makes it—it a wonderful evening. Please forgive me for anybody I've left off. I'm sure I have. The next little announcement I get to make is just kind of a fun thing. And I'm sure all night you've been admiring the beautiful art glass pieces at the center of your tables. These are all handmade, blown and turned by James Hayes at his studio in Pine Bluff, which happens to be on a historic dairy farm, which is very neat. But we want to, in order to show our thanks for your generosity and for your support of this evening and of the Alliance [*clears throat*], we would like for one of each of you at each table to take one of these beautiful pieces home as our thank you. And the way that we're gonna do this [*laughs*]*—if—if* you haven't grabbed a program already, you might want to go ahead and grab one. If you look in the inside flap of your program, inside cover, the bottom right-hand corner, if you have a little red dot, you are the lucky winner [*laughter and conversation among audience members*] of one of these beautiful pieces.

[*Applause*]

VM: [*Laughs*] Oh, sure. Okay. Okay, okay. I will, I will. All right, I know you're all excited. [*Laughs*]

JG: [*Unclear words*]

VM: I know.

[*Laughter and conversation continues*]

VM: Okay, no fighting over them. [*Laughs*] And James Hayes, I'm not sure if he's here. Are you here, James? He might've had to leave a bit early, but he was here earlier, and we—so we thank him so much for these beautiful pieces. They're really—they're Arkansas treasures as well. He's—he's a wonderful Hendrix alum. I know we have a lot of Hendrix folks here tonight and—as I'm an alum. So I just want to thank all of you so much for helping us kick off this thirtieth anniversary, and Diane Alderson is looking at me to tell who my grandparents are [*laughs*] because I actually have an El Dorado connection, too. And I was telling somebody earlier. El Dorado is a place that I've spent so many summers at the Presbyterian Church and Bible School that it feels like home, and I feel—anytime I hear El Dorado, I kind of feel like, oh, somebody, you know, we're—we're family. My—my grandparents, Bob and Wanda Ragsdale are here. [*Laughs*]
Anyway.

[*Applause*]

VM: So I want to thank you for—for helping us kick off the thirtieth anniversary in this really festive way. And—and Senator Pryor

mentioned the—the Arkansas Preservation Conference, which will be happening in May, May 5 through 7. And you actually have a—a schedule of upcoming thirtieth anniversary events, which I invite each of you to attend throughout 2011 in your program. But I want to call your attention to one in particular. On May 5, we will be celebrating the founders of the organization, our founding president, Parker Westbrook, Carl Miller who's also here, and Bobby Roberts and Charles Witsell at a founder's lunch on May 5. So I would love to see everybody here—everybody there as well. And we'll continue the celebration throughout 2011. Also I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't make a personal appear—appeal to each of you who are not members of the Alliance to—to join the Alliance. We are a membership organization, and we re—we rely the wonderful, wonderful members that we have to help us with our programs and outreach throughout the state. So there are some—some very nice blue membership brochures out on the table if you have a chance to pick one up, please. And you can become part of this community that is helping to preserve Arkansas's rich heritage. I want to just sort of leave you with one parting thought that you've heard tonight about Theodosia Murphy Nolan's lifelong dedication to preservation of the treasures to

Arkansas and treasures of the South. And the projects you've seen here tonight all represent the wonderful work being done today, hard work, by a lot of people to preserve the places that are touchstones to our Arkansas heritage. And I want to, again, congratulate all of the award winners and thank you for your hard work and dedication to the places that matter to Arkansas. The projects that you've all seen tonight, I think as of—as you've heard, demonstrate Mrs. Nolan's philosophy that preservation is about more than just saving old buildings. It's about the importance of history to our communities and to our families. And it's about saving the distinctive places that make Arkansas and the South unique for today and for the future. So thank you again for helping us celebrate the wonderful work and the people who are committed to preserving the places that matter to Arkansas. Have a good night.

[Applause]

JG: Thank you very much, Vanessa. Thank each one of you as you leave tonight. Keep in mind that you are stewards of our heritage. Good evening.

[Applause]

[Silence]

[End of Transcript 00:52:34]

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