

2008 Awards from the Collin County Historical Commission

Collin McKinney Achievement Award

Chestnut Square: Chestnut Square consists of ten structures on two acres that span two city blocks in McKinney, where over 15,000 people visit annually. In addition to the historical Dulaney House, Dulaney Cottage, Two Bit Taylor Inn, Faires House and Johnson House, the village includes a replica of the Wilmeth School house, the Chapel at Chestnut Square, Dixie's Store and the Bevel Reception House.

School group tours are targeted at students in grades 1-5, which highlight the daily lives of people who lived in McKinney from 1850-1930. In addition private and public tours are offered. On the second Sunday of the month living history groups hold living history days. A three day prairie adventure camp is held for children to spend their time living as pioneers. Chestnut Square hosts a farmers market and an annual tour of homes in December.

All of this has been made possible by the Heritage Guild of Collin County which has created a way for the citizens of Collin County to connect to their heritage.

Excellence in Historical Education Award

North Texas History Center: The North Texas History Center's Education Program began modestly during the 2001-2002 school year, serving just over 1100 students. Now the program is in its sixth year serving children from across North Texas. NTHC averages approximately 8,000 students a year. Second and third graders experience pioneer times and learn about not just the people who came as pioneers, but why they chose to pull up stakes and move across the country. Fifth graders are immersed in the Civil War while their fourth grade counterparts are introduced to the Civil War and its impact on the cattle industry and cowboys in North Texas.

The North Texas History Center believes that every student can learn if given the opportunity and that is why each of their programs offers students a chance to touch and do as well as see. Regardless of one's learning style, there is a component of the visit that will truly impact the student. One teacher commented "Every year it keeps getting better and better! My students were engaged from the minute they walked in and had so much fun that they didn't seem to mind 'learning something'!"

Leadership in Preservation Award

City of Frisco: In the midst of new growth the city of Frisco voted bonds and built a Heritage Center for the education and enjoyment of its current population of 100,000 people. The city partnered with the Heritage Association of Frisco which served as historical overseer and builder of the museum and center.

The city set aside six acres for the center which includes the Heritage Center Museum, a one-room school house, the Crozier-Covington-Sickle Victorian era home, and the old Lebanon

Baptist Church. Also included are a restored Frisco Railroad engine and caboose, a rebuilt log cabin, a replica of the Frisco Railroad Depot, a replica of the Gaby Blacksmith Shop and more.

Recently the Frisco City Council approved a 40 year lease agreement with the Museum of American Railroad, which is located in Fair Park in Dallas, to move to Frisco.

Living Legacy of Collin County Award (posthumous)

Helen Hall: Helen Hall has spent a life time preserving the History of Collin County. She has worked in numerous historical associations and was an avid researcher and author of Collin County History. Helen Gibbard Hall was a historian extraordinaire. She had a vast knowledge of McKinney and Collin County which she graciously shared with everyone through conversations and her column, “Historical Vignettes” and she wrote for 20 years in the *McKinney Courier-Gazette*. She coauthored with her husband, Roy Hall, *Pioneering in Collin County, Texas* and authored *The Way It all Began: McKinney, Texas A History*.

Living Legacy of Collin County Award

James West: James West is a sixth generation resident of Collin County and grew up in McKinney. He received his Bachelors Degree in Architecture at Texas Tech University and Masters in Architecture and Urban Planning from Ohio State. He worked on the Metro in Washington D. C. and returned to McKinney in 1973.

James West has been involved in saving much of McKinney’s rich historic past with his skills as an architect. He has been invaluable to Chestnut Square and the North Texas History Center. He helped save the oldest home in McKinney, The Farris House and probably the second oldest surviving house, the Taylor Inn. In addition he helped save eight other structures at Chestnut Square. He recently rehabilitated the Bevel House as a reception meeting hall for the Square.

Today, James West has worked with numerous families in helping them to restore their historic homes, which includes in the hundreds. He has helped design sensitive infill designs such at the Heard-Craig Center for the Arts. He continues to serve on the Board at Chestnut Square and Pecan Grove Cemetery and contributes architectural assistance to both. James helped establish the living history program at Chestnut Square and organizes and oversees many Boy Scout Eagle projects which benefit Chestnut Square.

James West’s energy is always focused on maintaining and sharing the history of McKinney. He is truly a living legacy in Collin County.

Other Nominees for the Awards

Allen Heritage Guild held an event commemorating the 130th anniversary of the first successful train robbery in Texas by Sam Bass and his Gang on February 23, 2008. Over 400 people attended the event in Allen, Texas.

Heritage Association of Frisco is a ten years old organization and is responsible for developing the New Frisco Museum and its adjacent Heritage Center which honors the efforts of Frisco and Collin County as a whole.

Pecan Grove Cemetery maintains the graves of those who fought in wars since 1836 and hosts an Annual Memorial Day celebration in honor of the fallen heroes of Collin County and McKinney.

Martha Newsome Bundy has dedicated her life to preserving everything historical about Collin County and is currently serving as chairman of the Board. She is founder of the Collin County Historic Preservation Group and has been responsible for republishing historic books such as Stambaugh's *History of Collin County*.

Ridgell Murphy McKinney is the great, great grandson of Collin McKinney, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. He is an active member of the Collin County Historic Preservation Group and was recognized as "Outstanding Collin County Historian" and "Honorary Member for Life" by CCHPG.

Janet Maccubbin worked out details of how to administer a program of tax incentives for homeowners of Historical Downtown/Old Donation area of Frisco. The City Council approved the plan and she is the lone administrator of the plan.