

The Conservation Society of San Antonio  
**THE PRESERVATION  
 ADVOCATE**

# In Celebration of Amanda

Torrey Stanley Carleton, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President

Did you realize that the Conservation Society of San Antonio will mark its 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2024?

Auspicious occasions such as this deserve to be celebrated as Texans say, 'early and often'. The milestone also reminds us to remember our beginnings.

Organized on March 22, 1924 by 13 visionary women who recognized the urgent need for historic preservation, or, as Miss Anna Ellis so deftly said, "Shall I say, "Yes, I remember it," or 'Here it is, I helped save it'?" With those simple words was born The Conservation Society of San Antonio, a mighty organization that has remained true to its purpose for the last century.

Amanda Cartwright Taylor was one of the 13 ladies who rallied to Anna Ellis' call. A proud founder of the Society, Taylor served two terms as President, first from 1931-1933 during the time the Society purchased and restored the Granary at Mission San José. That bold move by Taylor and the members of her Board marked the start of the Society's sustained effort to preserve our historic San Antonio Missions. We can only imagine how proud she would have been when they were inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 2015. Amanda Cartwright Taylor was again elected President in 1939-1941 during the construction of the River Walk and La Villita.

In recognition of her distinguished service, the Society established the Amanda Cartwright Taylor Award, the highest award we grant to the individual or organization who has given exemplary performance in support of the purposes of the Society.

The celebration of Amanda Taylor Cartwright's distinguished leadership is once again making news. In December of 2021, George Sealy, III of Houston, Texas presented the Society with two major gifts. One established the Amanda

Cartwright Taylor Distinguished Lecture and a second was given to provide an endowment to sustain the annual lecture over time.

"As a young boy visiting from Galveston, my uncle George enjoyed frequent trips to the San José Granary restoration site with his Grandmother Amanda to deliver hand tools and check on progress during the Depression. Her tireless dedication to saving the Granary, La Villita and the Riverwalk made a lasting impression on him," recalls George's nephew, Ed Sealy. "He saw the amount of perspiration that it took to bring these projects to life. It is to that memory he honors with his gift."

"The Society is grateful for George Sealy's generosity," stated Society President, Kathy Rhoads. "My hope is that his vision inspires others to consider the opportunity to establish an endowment or a legacy donation in anticipation of our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary."

The Amanda Cartwright Taylor Distinguished Lecture debuts on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at the McNay Art Museum at 6 PM. Our first Distinguished Lecturer is David Vela, the recently retired Deputy Director of the National Park Service and author of the autobiography *Hola Ranger: My Journey Through Our National Parks*. Vela, a Texas native, began his career in the newly-established San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and went on to become Superintendent of several National Parks, including Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming and Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park near Fredericksburg. In 2019, Vela became the first Latino to head the National Park Service when he became Acting Director. Vela's book chronicles his 38-year career in the parks with insight and humor.

The lecture is free and open to the public. Please join us!



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**INAUGURAL AMANDA CARTWRIGHT TAYLOR DISTINGUISHED LECTURE & BOOK SIGNING**

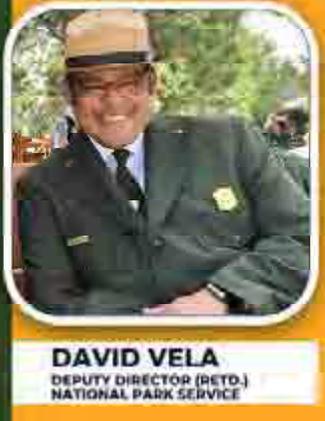
**A LATINO'S JOURNEY THROUGH OUR NATION'S NATIONAL PARKS**

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2022 - 6:00 PM**

CHIEGO LECTURE HALL - MCNAY ART MUSEUM  
 6000 N. NEW BRAUNFELS AVE.

**FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

SPONSORED BY GEORGE SEALY, III IN HONOR OF HIS GRANDMOTHER, AMANDA CARTWRIGHT TAYLOR, A FOUNDER OF THE CONSERVATION SOCIETY



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Kathy Rhoads, President**

The Conservation Society of San Antonio will soon be moving to the Courand House at 1146 S. Alamo in the King William District. The Courand House was built in 1906 by noted San Antonio architect Leo Dielmann, who did many churches



and schools in town. Its NeoClassical design features two-story Corinthian columns framing a large, double porch facing Adams Street. The yellow brick house was restored in 2019 and received a Conservation Society award for restoring and revealing the original porte cochere and stained glass windows while retaining historic details throughout. The building has been used as a law office and residence for the last thirty years.

It is exciting that the Conservation Society will continue to be in King William. The Courand House will house offices on the ground floor, the Conservation Society Foundation Library in the basement, and meeting rooms and volunteer space on the second floor. The Society will be remodeling bathrooms and adding an elevator, but otherwise preserving the original interior and exterior finishes.

In June, the Conservation Society sold the Edward Steves mansion in King William after owning it for 70 years. The private sale included a confidentiality agreement that is binding on all parties. We are very pleased that the landmark building will be restored as a residence in the King William neighborhood and the owners are committed to continuing the restoration of this historic home, dating to 1876.



The Courand House - 1146 So. Alamo



Closing Day for the The Edward Steves Homestead: Terry Schoenert and Kathy Rhoads with the Conservation Society; and Ginger Klaerner with Mission Title

## Community Grants - Accepting Applications August 1<sup>st</sup>

Beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>, the Conservation Society will begin accepting applications for Community Grants. The grant program is funded in part by NIOSA® and supports the Society's purpose, which is to:

“...preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, places and customs relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty, and all that is admirably distinctive to our State.”

Building Grants are awarded for the exterior restoration or rehabilitation of historic structures in the San Antonio area that are at least 50-years-old. Previously awarded grants have assisted with roofs, foundations, windows, plaster, facades, chimneys, front doors, porches, and stonework. To access the application or for more information, visit: [www.saconservation.org/what-we-do/building-grants](http://www.saconservation.org/what-we-do/building-grants)

Educational Grants are awarded to individuals and organizations for educational projects related to historic preservation such as research, video production, publications, printing, and document conservation. To access the application or for more information, visit: [www.saconservation.org/what-we-do/educationalgrants-scholarships](http://www.saconservation.org/what-we-do/educationalgrants-scholarships)

Completed application forms cannot be submitted online. Applications must be mailed or submitted in person to the Society headquarters at: 107 King William Street, San Antonio, TX, 78204. We are open Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm (Closed Noon - 1pm for lunch). The deadline for all applications is 4 pm, Friday, September. 30<sup>th</sup>. The Community Grants Committee will notify all applicants of the decision of the Society's Board of Directors in early December.

# THE APPROACH TO PRESERVATION

If you want to save buildings, you need to have a lot of people pulling in the same direction. The recent save of the Hughes House at Courtland and Belknap is a great example of this. Community advocates, especially longtime Society volunteer Ricki Kushner of the Tobin Hill Community Association, worked with Society grant recipient Michael Carroll to craft a Request for Review of Significance, the first step in the landmark process. This document revealed much of both architectural and historical interest.

The house was built in 1912 and designed by St. Louis architect Mason Maury. While the papers called it a version of Colonial style, its broad, sweeping rooflines and porches framed by square pillars, and topped with red tile, is more a melding of the modernist Prairie Style with Spanish Colonial finishes. The first floor contains no less than four unique fireplaces. The house was built for Russell Meriwether Hughes, an entrepreneur and inventor who moved to San Antonio in 1902 with his wife, Lilian, and their two daughters, Lilian and Russell. The family supported performing arts and daughter Russell Meriwether Hughes began her dance career from the house, later touring Latin America, Europe, Asia and the Pacific as the “international queen of ethnic dance,” known as “La Meri.”

The Conservation Society worried that the house, owned by the Archdiocese of San Antonio and used for decades as a Catholic student center, was going to be demolished and then sold to San Antonio College, presumably for a

**Vincent Michael, Executive Director**

parking lot. A 2019 Texas law gives religious institutions much more leeway in disposing of their property than other owners. We immediately wrote to the Trustees of San Antonio College stressing the importance of the building to the neighborhood.

We wrote the Archdiocese and asked them to market the house to see if a preservation-minded buyer might exist. We produced “**SAVE THE HUGHES HOUSE**” yard signs distributed by neighbors in the Tobin Hill, Monte Vista and Alta Vista neighborhoods.

Soon, San Antonio College wrote back, saying that they were not pursuing buying the property. A short time later, a **FOR SALE** sign appeared in front of the house. I contacted several individuals who had expressed interest in buying and restoring the house. I was contacted through my blog by a woman named May Chu, who also owns the oldest house in Beacon, New York. I introduced her to noted San Antonio chef Andrew Weissman, and the two partnered to buy the house, planning a wine-and-cheese venue for the first floor.

Success came from working with all parties, generating community support, and connecting key players. Thanks also to member Kathy Trenchard, who produced a lovely papel picado portrait of La Meri as part of her preservation advocacy.





**H**appy Summer! Hope everyone is safe, healthy and staying cool. NIOSA 2022 was a great success. We had great crowds and all seemed to have fun, even if it was wall to wall people. That's NIOSA! Thanks to all who volunteered and/or joined in the fun.

Frontier Town, part of French Quarter, Clown Alley and Irish Flats areas did extremely well in HemisFair and along Alamo Street. Everyone appeared to like the new placement. With the upcoming construction work on Alamo Street and maybe more things happening in La Villita, next year's NIOSA will be another planning challenge. But our NIOSA team is ready and able to

accept and conquer all challenges to ensure another NIOSA success!

Next year's date for NIOSA Is April 25 - April 28, 2023. Make a note on your calendar now and come join the fun, as a volunteer or a guest.

If you need to get out of the house sometime, please join the flower makers and/or the Cascarone makers. Please contact the NIOSA office at 210-227-6168 to confirm the Thursday time and location. Also, we can occasionally use help in other ways –give us a call!

**VIVA NIOSA!!!**

## SOUTHWEST CRAFT CENTER

Frank Burney, Attorney

**T**he week of June 27 marked the merger between the Southwest School of Art and UTSA, a joint effort to create a world-class art school in San Antonio on the grounds of the historic Ursuline campus.

When I first moved to City of San Antonio (COSA) in 1981, the managing partner threw a file on my desk and told me to walk across the street and find out what trouble the ladies of Southwest School of Art had caused. After over 40 years of being largely pro-bono legal counsel, Board Chair, and trustee, I hope you won't mind my reflections.

The history of the School is one of multi-talented, visionary, strong women. The School was originally founded by eight nuns who arrived in Galveston in 1851, and then travelled across the uninhabited Texas frontier by donkeys, facing cactus, Indians, heat, and insects, with the task of opening an Order of the Ursulines in San Antonio. They encouraged young Francois Giraud, the first COSA Surveyor and later Mayor, to build a Convent, a Chapel, and later the Academy Building. Sisters Mary Patrick Joseph and Mary Augustine Joseph led this effort.

Later, the School became a school for San Antonio's young women, both boarding and day students. This was the first school for women, as only men were taught to read and write. These strong Ursuline Nuns provided education to women in a wide range of fields, including the arts. Mother St. Ursula Hudson, the Reverend Mother of the Convent, led the Ursuline in the 20th Century.

In 1965, the Ursulines vacated the downtown campus for the suburbs, leaving the historic buildings vacant and almost demolished by a developer.

Fortunately, more strong women, largely with the help of the Conservation Society, purchased the buildings and grounds, and entered into an agreement whereby the Southwest Craft Center (SWCC) would relocate from La Villita and build a non-profit art education center. The SWCC grew into one of the preeminent studio art schools in the country, led again by strong, creative women.

At the School, we frequently refer to the "angels" who along the way restored and sustained the beautiful buildings and grounds, names like Nancy, Ruthie, Floy, Emily, Edith, Maggie, Helen Marie, Paula, and so many others. Hopefully UTSA recognizes the history, beauty, and center of learning that the Southwest Craft Center is a result of these strong, visionary women. The angels will be watching...



# DONATIONS: MARCH 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2022

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Kathy Rhoads

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH SEMINAR ~ MAY 14<sup>TH</sup> "THE STATE OF THE CITY: SAN ANTONIO PRESERVATION"



# 2022-2023 OFFICERS

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# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS! March 1, 2022- JUNE 30, 2022

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Alamo Airborne

Alamo City Arts

San Antonio Chapter of AGC

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Emilie Weissler  
Rebecca Wilson



Historic Homeowner Fair



Capital Club Event @ Roosevelt Library



NIOSA Opening Parade

# JUNIOR ASSOCIATES SPRING ADVENTURES

April 2022, Junior Associates enjoyed a behind the scenes tour of NIOSA. Following the tour, they assisted in unloading NIOSA decorations to prepare for the event. The following weekend, Junior Associates enjoyed participating in the King William Fair parade with the NIOSA Hat King and Queen.

The following month, Junior Associates met at San Pedro Creek Culture park to enjoy a beautiful Sunday afternoon looking at the new additions and art work.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 11<sup>th</sup>. Watch for details to be mailed in August.

Interested in joining or want more info? Send Email to: [ja@saconservation.org](mailto:ja@saconservation.org) or contact the office.



## CAPITAL CLUB MEMBERS



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Glazer's

### Ionic Level

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### Doric Level

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Mrs. Patsy Light

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The Preservation Advocate is published by The Conservation Society of San Antonio.

Send letters, articles, or comments to: [conserve@saconservation.org](mailto:conserve@saconservation.org).

Submission deadline for the Fall Newsletter is Friday, September 2, 2022.

The purpose for which the San Antonio Conservation Society was formed is to preserve and encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, places and customs relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty and all that is admirable and distinctive to our State; and by such physical and cultural preservation to keep the history of Texas legible and intact, to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow with knowledge of our inherited regional values.

Publications Committee: Paul Ringenbach, Ph.D., Chair; Paula Piper, Vice Chair;  
Kathy Rhoads, Ex Officio; Murphy Emmons; Christine Forestier; Gary Houston; Velma Nanka-Bruce



Photo Credit: 89-616, UTSA, Special Collections

'Here it is, I helped to save it' - Miss Anna Ellis - 1927

## FAIRMOUNT HOTEL

Built in 1906 and vacant by 1968, the Fairmount Hotel was scheduled for demolition to clear space for the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel and Mall. In 1980, when a public release confirmed this, Conservation Society President Joanna Parrish began the fight to save the hotel. In a series of actions, the Society halted the destruction, secured the necessary funding, and was a major player in moving the 3.2 million pound- structure to its present location in March 1985. This is but one example of the amazing things that the Society has accomplished.

## SAVE THE DATES !

**Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup>**

**APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR COMMUNITY GRANTS**

**Monday, September 5<sup>th</sup>**

**LABOR DAY HOLIDAY - OFFICES CLOSED**

**Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm**

**JUNIOR ASSOCIATE MEETING**

Notice will be sent to all enrolled Juniors

**\*\*Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm**

**AMANDA CARTWRIGHT TAYLOR**

**DISTINGUISHED LECTURE AND BOOK SIGNING**

**“A LATINO’S JOURNEY THROUGH OUR  
NATION’S NATIONAL PARKS”**

**Chiego Lecture Hall - McNay Art Museum**

**6000 N. New Braunfels Ave, 78209**

**Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm**

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Location TBD**

**Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am-4:00 pm**

**DEADLINE FOR COMMUNITY GRANTS**

**Stuemke Barn at 107 King William**

**Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup> - Friday November 25<sup>th</sup>**

**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY - OFFICES CLOSED**

**Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm**

**2022 WEIHNACHTSFEIER CELEBRATION FOR  
SOCIETY MEMBERS & FRIENDS**

**Location TBD**