

October 16, 2008

The National Preservation Movement:

While the concept of preserving our architectural heritage has been in place since before the Civil War era, the preservation movement really got underway after the loss of Penn Station and the 1966 creation of the National Historic Preservation Act that established the National Register of Historic Places as the nation's official list of districts, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture.

History of LSNF:

Locally, the preservation movement in Buffalo began around 1970 with a very special group of people, several of whom are still living and in Buffalo: Tony Fryer, Bill Shelgren, Fred Houston, Rosie Esty, Bill Magavern. This group of community activists, led by Tony purchased the Coit House, one of Buffalo's oldest structures and a rare example of the Federal style of architecture which was slated for demolition. This single, important effort began the long history of successes that became known as the Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier. Tony, would you please stand so that we might recognize you. A few highlights for which Tony and the LSNF should be recognized include:

- Awarded a permanent seat on the Preservation Board;
- Acquired covenants on some of the City's most important historic structures including the Guaranty Building and four 19th Century houses on Washington Street;
- Raised money to purchase two of the beautiful wisteria entry windows that were removed from the Darwin Martin House and were up for auction at Christy's;
- Developed a successful downtown marker effort and regional plaque program to educate the public throughout the region on important historic structures and sites including the Buffalo Lighthouse, UB's Hayes Hall, DAR Chapter House and many other sites;
- Led a public outcry, (greatly assisted by Joan Bozer) that helped save the Old Post Office which now successfully houses ECC's downtown campus;
- Funded survey of the Olmsted Park system in preparation for the listing of the entire system as a National Landmark;
- Gifted the historic Hull House in Lancaster, soon to be an independent effort under Gary Costello's able leadership;

- Host of weekly downtown lectures on a wide variety of topics from the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus to Buildings & Energy;
- Provider in partnership since 2006 with the Preservation Coalition of 500 excellent tours annually;
- Publisher of beautiful books on local history, including *Oakland Place: Gracious Living in Buffalo*

History of Pres. Co:

Recognizing Buffalo's rich architectural heritage, the Preservation Coalition of Erie County was founded by Peter Filim, Susan McCartney, Joan Bozer, Scott Field, Kitty Turgeon and Robert Rust in 1981 after the unfortunate loss of the Metcalfe House. Peter and other founders who might be present, would you please stand so that we might recognize you this evening. Like the LSNF, Pres Co has had many notable accomplishments a few of which I would like to highlight tonight:

- Stopped the NY Telephone Company on Church Street from sheathing their Gothic Revival Skyscraper in a granite box;
- Helped establish the Joseph Ellicott Historic District, the Cobblestone Historic District and the Hamlin Park Historic District;
- Took title to the Central Terminal and spun it off to the Central Terminal Restoration Corp.;
- Organized 600 people to relay cobblestone in the Cobblestone District;
- Sued NYS to force it to maintain the Richardson complex and won, spurring a long awaited multi-million dollar investment in stabilization with an eye towards rehab and reuse;
- Coordinated a successful grassroots campaign and sued NYS to preserve the Canal District and create a destination site that celebrates its history rather than settling for a generic waterfront design.
- Provider of an excellent tour program, now in partnership with the LSNF.

Tonight we celebrate the good work of the Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier and the Preservation Coalition which has provided a strong foundation upon which to establish Preservation Buffalo Niagara which will take the best of what these organizations have to offer and build upon them to create a full service organization that will serve Erie and Niagara Counties.

Presented by Blythe T. Merrill

