



The City of Roanoke Historic Markers - Roanoke Life Saving Crew (page 1) October 2020 at 321 Luck Avenue; Hunton Life Saving Crew (left) September 2020 at 28 Wells Avenue; and Burrell Memorial Hospital (right) planned for 2021 at 611 McDowell Avenue

HERITAGE EDUCATION AWARD FOR NELSON HARRIS

Nelson Harris, local historian, spearheaded an effort for three Historical Markers: Hunton Life Saving and First Aid Crew, Roanoke Life Saving and First Aid Crew, and Burrell Memorial Hospital. These markers, were approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and met their criteria for regional, statewide or national significance. Despite the lengthy approval process, Harris believes the markers raise awareness of significant historic individuals and organizations. For each of the markers Harris performed research, wrote the application, worked with the VDHR, secured financial sponsors, and developed site selections with the city traffic engineer.

The Carilion Clinic Foundation contributed to the cost of all three markers and Roanoke Emergency Medical Services (REMS) contributed to the expense for the Roanoke Life Saving and First Aid Crew marker. Harris also credits the City of Roanoke for their role in receiving the markers, pre-approving the sites (typically in the city right-of way), installing the markers, and agreeing to maintain them. Harris has been instrumental in heading up the efforts for other local historic markers and has indicated he will continue efforts to gain the state approval for other significant local markers.

Roanoke Life Saving and First Aid Crew, reputed to be the oldest rescue squad in the country, was formed in 1928 by Julian Stanley Wise who as a child witnessed 2 men drown in the Roanoke River. John M. Oakey Funeral Service provided the group with an ambulance and they operated out of Oakeys Garage.

Hunton Life Saving and First Aid Crew originally operated out of the YMCA Building on Wells Avenue. Alexander Terrell organized the squad in December 1941 after the Pearl Harbor attack. Hunton was reputed to be the first all Black volunteer rescue squad in the country and also provided safety and first aid training. It was operational until 1987.

Burrell Memorial Hospital was the longest-operating African American Hospital in the region. It was opened in 1915 by 5 Black physicians and named after their colleague, Dr. Issac Burrell. Burrell was denied medical treatment for gall stone surgery by local white hospitals and was required to travel in a baggage car to Washington DC to receive medical care. He died shortly after the operation. Burrell became the largest medical facility for Black patients in the region and included a nursing school. In 1921 the hospital moved from a house on Henry Street to an old school building on McDowell Avenue.



Botetourt County 250th Anniversary Committee - (L to R) Lois Switzer, Wendy Wingo, Angela Coon, Donna Vaughn

HERITAGE EDUCATION AWARD FOR BOTETOURT COUNTY 250TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

Botetourt County had many plans for a delayed 250th anniversary celebration that have been postponed until 2021 because of restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, earlier this year they were able to host a myriad of programs including: a 250th birthday party; featured a talk by retired Judge Bo Trumbo; a new county history by Ed McCoy; an illustrated magazine edited by Anita Firebaugh; a film about historic Looney's Ferry at Buchanan; a special anniversary seal was designed and added to the county's website; and a video on "Picturesque Botetourt County" was created.

Girl Scouts, Ashley Crowder and Sarah Montgomery prepared the film on scenic views of Fincastle's old buildings and scenes from Eagle Rock, Troutville, Buchanan and other points from the county's long history.

Plans for 2021 include a dedication of an anniversary plaque at the courthouse; a tour of Fincastle; an event at Blue Ridge Vineyard at Eagle Rock; a quilt show; a genealogy and history fair; and a musical event. Botetourt County Historical Society, Historic Fincastle Inc., and area churches and civic clubs are planning to observe the 250th anniversary in a variety of county-wide events. A major exhibit by the Historical Society of Western Virginia is planned to span Botetourt's decorative history from 1770 to today. Presented by the Bank of Botetourt, the special exhibit is **Botetourt County: 251 Years of Delight**, and will explore Botetourt's material culture from the extravagant to everyday with leading artisans and craftsmen. The exhibit will be on display at the O. Winston Link Museum in Roanoke from March to November 2021.



Matt Chittum



Liza Field

**ADVOCACY & EDUCATION AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY & EDUCATION AWARDS
FOR MATT CHITTUM AND LIZA FIELD**

Matt Chittum has been a leading reporter on historical and preservation issues for the Roanoke Times for more than 26 years. He wrote about efforts to preserve Fire Station 7; the transition of Fire Station 1 to private ownership; hundreds of unidentified African Americans buried in Old Lick Cemetery and efforts to identify them; civil rights attorney Oliver Hill; the disposition of the Dumas Center; the long history of Huntingdon, one of the oldest houses in Roanoke; the stories behind the Lebanese community in Roanoke; and renaming a lane in Highland Park lane after Joel Richert, a preservation activist. As a seasoned reporter, Chittum explored these and many other topics in depth, raising public awareness and giving all sides of an issue. He recently left the Roanoke Times and now works for Virginia Tech.

Liza Field is a Roanoke teacher, writer and environmentalist. A powerful advocate for land conservation for a quarter-century, Field played a vital role in persuading the commonwealth to purchase the Big Survey property in Wythe County, which protected a scenic view and the water supply for Wytheville. Her **Field Notes Column** in The Roanoke Times and Wytheville Enterprise delve into the environment and philosophy to inspire a generation of nature lovers. Field served on the board of Western Virginia Land Trust, now Blue Ridge Land Conservancy, and later on its advisory council. She and her mother, Betty Field, were leaders of a successful effort to protect Mill Mountain by opposing construction of an inn and a restaurant on the mountain. In 2015, the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy gave both Fields the A, Victor Thomas Environmental Stewardship Award. She teaches online courses at Wytheville Community College and other schools.



The Dilly Dally Located at 1511 Eddy Avenue (above) and 715 West Main Street (right) both in Salem



HISTORIC RENOVATION AWARDS FOR LISA & REID GARST AND ELLEN LILLEY



The Dilly Dally corner market dates back to 1910. According to Lisa Garst, J. R. Maxey built the building.

It was sold to RT and Rindy Overby who ran it from 1910-1935. In 1943 the business sold to JJ Ludwick,

then was conveyed to June Ludwick Moore by her sister, Mary Jane Faris, in 1972. After her death, the property was held for the last nine years by a bank until the Garsts purchased it. The name came from the fact that what people did there was to “dilly dally”.

The Garsts applied for and received historic designation from the City of Salem. Lisa and Reid want the Dilly Dally to become what it once was a “South Salem Neighborhood anchor. The restoration project has been extensive, with the Garsts saving and reusing as much as possible from the original structure.

Hardwood floors in the market portion of the building were relatively undamaged and now gleam once more. Original walls and shelves were cleaned and repainted. The original sunrise design in the front windows was painted yellow and became the inspiration for the DD’s logo and motto on the new T-shirts. Lisa also researched the original green paint on the exterior and Sherwin Williams calls it “Dilly Dally Green”.

The restoration of the Queen Ann house, 715 West Main Street,

next to Salem’s Lake Spring has been completed by the current owner, Ms. Ellen Lilley. According to Lilley, the house has been restored on the interior and exterior with all existing moldings, wood floors, pocket doors, exterior wood siding and columns retained from the 1910 reconstruction. Additionally, some of the original landscape, designed by famed landscape architect, Stanley White are still intact. The house was originally built in 1903 and was redesigned as a Queen Anne seven years later. The grounds consist of 2.5 acres and include part of the old Lake Spring Motel. The home was formerly owned by such Salem notables as Cabell Brand and the Deyerle and the McVitty families.





The Fincastle Cafe and The Pie Shoppe (above) and Virginia Barkett at The Pie Shoppe (right)



ADAPTIVE REUSE AWARD FOR WOODSDALE GROUP

Owned by Virginia and Erryn Barkett, The Woodsdale Group has created a vibrant community destination in the town center of Fincastle through their restorations and adaptive reuse of two long vacant historic structures, the W.W. Crush Merchant Building, c.1898 and The Luster building, c.1884. The brick buildings are contributing buildings to the Fincastle historic district.

The Fincastle Café, 18 South Roanoke Street, formerly a vacant corner drugstore, opened in 2019 and **The Pie Shoppe** and **1772 Rooftop on Main** opened in 2020. The Fincastle Café became an immediate lunch and coffee favorite for the Courthouse crowd. The Pie Shoppe with its Main Street storefront offers take out ordering and curbside service and has sold hundreds of homemade dinner and dessert pies. 1772 Rooftop is a very popular outdoor dining venue. The former pharmacy was refurbished with special care to preserve much of the look of the original building including the original ceiling, window beams, and trim. Plaster was removed from the interior walls to expose the brick. Ginny Barkett says "We tried to showcase the original building, Fincastle is an historic town. We love the history that is here and we wanted to celebrate it and show the beauty of the original building." When the Courthouse fire occurred in 1970 part of the original second floor roof burned, it has since been repaired and now serves as the dining venue. The Luster building, 2 West Main Street, completed in 1894, housed the JO Luster Tin and Stove Establishment. Iron cornices, window capping on the front of the building, and stained and penciled brickwork survive. The bay window was constructed to provide light for a dentist office, later used by telephone operators.

The Woodsdale Group has also renovated and restored Woodsdale Manor, located at 10958 Lee Highway (Route 11) in Fincastle as an event venue for weddings and other celebrations. This property is known as the Simmons Estate, c.1811 and the Woodsdale Group has preserved the original craftsmanship and materials gathered from the land by generations of the Simmons family.



*The Heironimus Building
before (left) and after
(right) at 410 South
Jefferson Street in
Roanoke*



ADAPTIVE REUSE AWARD FOR MONUMENT COMPANIES

The Heironimus Building at 401 South Jefferson Street stood vacant for nearly 25 years before being renovated as a mixed-use historic tax credit project by The Monument Companies of Richmond. The large and prominent corner building consists of more than 110,000 square feet now occupied by the Mast General Store on the ground floor with 77 apartment units (The Heirs) on the upper floors. This anchor building in downtown Roanoke began as three separate buildings and businesses. The c.1914 building at 401 Jefferson Street historically housed two retail stores: SH Heironimus Company (401-403) and Thurman & Boone Furniture Company (405-407). These two businesses continued to operate separately through the early 1950s. The building at 409 was constructed between 1907 and 1919. The Virginia Motor Car Company occupied that building in the 1920s. Historic photographs show that Herbert's Fine Feminine Footwear and Woolworths were located in this building by the 1940s. Between 1955 and 1957, the SH Heironimus Company expanded to occupy both the Thurman and Boone space and 409 Jefferson Street. The SH Heironimus Company, which was first established in Roanoke in 1890, became a regional department-store chain with numerous locations in Roanoke, Salem and Lynchburg. After being sold to a Texas-based company in 1993, the flagship store in Roanoke was closed in 1996. The last Heironimus store was located in Salem before closing in 2005. Although numerous developers looked at the building over the years, its large space and deteriorating condition posed significant challenges. The Monument Companies of Richmond purchased the building in 2018 for adaptive reuse. The historic tax credit project, which was completed in May 2020, included restoring the decorative cornice, reconstructing a compatible storefront, replacing the non-historic windows, and retaining interior features such as a portion of the escalator, the mezzanine level and the terrazzo floors.

Corridor and apartment doors inside
The Heirs



Boyd Cemetery in Buchanan



STEWARDSHIP AWARD FOR CARMEUSE AMERICAS

Ten men at the James River rock quarry in Buchanan cleaned up a deserted two-centuries-old cemetery as part of a sustainability project of their world-wide employer, Carmeuse Americas. The crew worked for six months as they cut weeds and brush and cleared tombstones as old as 1817. They also laid a new gravel path and repaired the sign in front. Clay Coleman, operations manager, said he chose the project when the Botetourt Genealogical Club called the Boyd Cemetery a “forgotten cemetery.” The cemetery is the oldest in Buchanan and holds some of the people that first planted roots there. “The Bells, the Boyd Family, the Johnstons, the Martins, they were all the movers and shakers of the day and helped shaped the community still to what we see today,” Buchanan Community Development Planner Harry Gleason said. Although people involved in the early history of Buchanan are buried there, Coleman could not find any of the families related to the burials, with no living descendants to take care of the cemetery. Coleman, who has worked at the quarry for 40 years, said this became their company's sustainability project. Now that they have cleaned it up, they plan to maintain it. The cemetery is located on Route 43, across from the quarry at the edge of town.



**Boyd Cemetery before clean-up
project**

*Evelyn Davis Bethel
Lifetime Achievement Award and
namesake for the new
Evelyn Davis Bethel Award
for the Preservation of
African American History*



LIEFTIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR EVELYN BETHEL

Evelyn Bethel was best known as a passionate and tenacious advocate for the preservation of the historic African-American neighborhood of Gainsboro in Roanoke. After graduating from Lucy Addison High School in 1951, Bethel left Roanoke for college and a long career. Following her retirement, she returned to Roanoke and began to work full time to fight for the preservation of her neighborhood. Bethel's advocacy efforts focused on engaging residents and government leaders resulted in critical changes to plans for the realignment of Wells Avenue, the formation of the Historic Gainsboro Preservation District, Inc., the designation of an Historic Overlay Zone in Northeast Gainsboro, and the National Register listing of the Henry Street Historic District and the Gainsboro Historic District. She also served as president of the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation in 2000. Bethel continued to advocate for the preservation of Gainsboro's history and buildings by representing the neighborhood interests in projects such as the Dumas Center, the Gainsboro History Walk, and the recent expansion of the Claude Moore Culinary School.

Evelyn Bethel and her sister, Helen Davis, persisted in their roles as community watchdogs by monitoring City activities and attending nearly every City Council meeting. Their presence (usually in matching outfits) on the back row in Council chambers was a constant reminder to City leaders not to forget the Gainsboro neighborhood or underestimate its residents. The Gainsboro Branch Library recognized Bethel and Davis for their work to preserve the neighborhood in 2018 and the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution in 2019 commending Evelyn and Helen for their work as historic preservationists and community leaders, and for striving "to lead by example when it comes to civic engagement and community service." Evelyn Bethel's tenacious advocacy for her neighborhood earned her the nickname "Gatekeeper of Gainsboro," and credit for much of what remains today of this once thriving African-American neighborhood in Roanoke.

RVPF is pleased to announce that her passion and advocacy for Gainsboro will be commemorated each year with the Evelyn Davis Bethel Award for the Preservation of African-American heritage.