



The League of Historic American Theatres
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Press Release

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*The League of Historic American Theatres
Presents 2009 Awards to Proctors and Killis P. Almond, FAIA*

BALTIMORE, MD (July 18, 2009) – **The League of Historic American Theatres**, celebrating leadership among historic theatres throughout North America, presented its **2009 Outstanding Historic Theatre Award** to **Proctors** in Schenectady, NY, and its **2009 Outstanding Individual Contribution Award**, to theatre architect **Killis P. Almond**, San Antonio, TX, during its 33rd Annual Conference and Theatre Tour in Cleveland, OH.

League President James Boese, Vice President of the Nederlander Producing Company of America, New York, NY, John Faust, Theatre Manager, Stanley Center for the Arts, Utica, NY, Maureen Patton, Executive Director, The Grand Opera House, Galveston, TX, and Tony Rivenbark, Executive Director, Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts, Wilmington, NC announced the awards during the organization's Annual Award Banquet on July 18, 2009 in the Palace Ballroom of the Wyndham Cleveland Hotel at Playhouse Square.

Presenting the Outstanding Historic Theatre Award to Philip Morris, President & CEO of Proctors, Boese acknowledged the historic theatre's significant accomplishments, inspiring excellence in the preservation, restoration and sustainable operation of American historic theatres. John Faust, who had nominated the theatre for the award, praised Proctors as "a major success story, a stellar example of how the restoration, expansion and innovative programming of a historic theatre totally revitalize a community."

Since 1926, Proctors, designed by famed theatre architect Thomas Lamb, has presented the very best in entertainment for New York's Capital Region. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Proctors has been transformed from "a vaudeville-era theatre in serious disrepair -- with only one working light bulb -- to the linchpin of a revitalized downtown," according to Jay Di Lorenzo, President of Preservation League of New York State. Proctors also received the Preservation League's award for Excellence in Historic Preservation in 2008.

Schenectady's downtown, like many small cities, has gone through a process of decay to rebirth. Schenectady Mayor Brian U. Stratton lauded Proctors for being "at the center of the city's rebirth as the cultural anchor." Jeff Janiszewski, President of the Schenectady City School District Board of Education, describes Proctors as "tremendous resource for the district," proving \$60,000 a year in programming for local students, including live performances, science-related films, in-school music and artist residencies, and literary teaching artists who work with teachers to address New York state learning standards. Letters of support from long-time theatre volunteers and patrons praised Proctors for bringing the community together, inspiring thought and philanthropy, providing outstanding cultural programming, and serving as a venue for community events.

Presenting the Outstanding Individual Contribution Award to Killis Almond, former League president Maureen Patton praised his professional work as an architect as well as many years' of volunteer service to promoting the preservation of historic theatres. Describing how she and Almond "grew up together in the historic theatre field," Patton recalled numerous trips with Almond "to aid in planning the future of a derelict theater, listening and

discussing everything from fund raising to fly floors, always with a determination to infuse others with his passion for this calling.” Patton joined other former recipients of League awards, Tony Rivenbark as well as Joseph Rosenberg, president, V.I.P Tours of New York, NY and Russell Collins, Executive Director, Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor, in nominating Killis Almond for the 2009 award.

A member of the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, Mr. Almond is president of Killis Almond Architects, PC, an acclaimed architectural firm renowned for work with over 75 historic theatres, including the Alameda Theatre in San Antonio, TX, Grand Opera House in Galveston, TX, Majestic Theatre in Gettysburg, PA, Saenger Theatre in Biloxi, MS, Fox Theatre in Hutchison, KS and the Sarasota Opera House in Sarasota, FL.

Mr. Almond has received numerous awards for the high quality of his restoration work, including the *Texas Historical Commission’s Award of Excellence in Historic Architecture* for the restoration of the Paramount Theatre in Abilene and the Old Main Building at Blinn College in Brenham and the *Texas Award for the Preservation of Historic Architecture*. He received the *National 1998 Excellence in Construction Award of Merit* from the Associated Builders and Contractors for the rehabilitation of the Ritz Theatre, Tiffin, Ohio. A member of the League of Historic American Theatres since 1986, Almond is a frequent presenter at League conferences and educational seminars and long-time leader of the association, having served as a member of the Board of Directors, 1988-93, and President, 1989-91.

About the League of Historic American Theatres

The **League of Historic American Theatres, Inc.** (www.lhat.org), a non-profit membership association, is a professional network dedicated to sustaining America’s historic theatres for the benefit of their communities and future generations. Recognizing issues and challenges unique to operating historic theatres, the League facilitates information exchange among members through peer interaction, conferences, and collaborative projects.

Founded in 1977 by 42 charter theatre members, the League of Historic American Theatres has grown into a network of more than 250 operating historic theatres throughout the United States and Canada. Past and current League members have driven the rescue and rehabilitation of hundreds of historic American theatres for more than three decades.

The League of Historic American Theatres envisions these unique showcases for human creativity, arts and culture as vital assets in livable communities throughout North America. We believe that historic theatres are irreplaceable social, economic, historic and cultural resources for their communities. As iconic, creative places of public assembly, they build community loyalty, reinforce community identity and heritage, stimulate downtown revitalization, promote pride of place and anchor creative economies.

Since 2005, the League has been making a transition from an organization best known for a membership which helps save historic theatres to a membership increasingly concerned with the tools, techniques and technologies of sustaining historic theatres at the center of their communities. We want to insure that historic theatres, ones that have been restored through extraordinary community efforts and at considerable expense during the past several decades, can be sustained for the benefit of future generations. By shifting focus to sustainability of operating theatres, the League can better sustain the field and assist emerging theatres.

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