

# THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

The Newsletter of the Dallas County Historical Commission

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## DCHC off to a great start

Historical Marker Program, Historic Resources Survey, and other programs top a long list of Dallas County Historical Commission activities for the year

By Jeff Dunn

CHAIRMAN,  
DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**W**elcome! As the new chairman of the Dallas County Historical Commission, it is my pleasure to report that the commission is off to a great start in 1999.

Our commission continues to have one of the strongest historical marker programs in the state. Earlier this year we dedicated markers at Sparkman Hillcrest Memorial Park to commemorate the life of Senator John G. Tower, at Mesquite to commemorate Mesquite Public Schools, and at Garland to commemorate the historic First Baptist Church. Other state marker applications are now pending for locations in Addison, Grand Prairie, Irving, Oak Cliff and other sections of Dallas. Official Texas Historical Markers are the commission's primary tools for educating the public about the rich heritage of our county. Historical groups are encouraged to apply for markers in their neighborhoods and cities to commemorate historic persons, buildings and events. (See related story

on page 2).

The commission is also involved in other important projects. We are beginning Phase II of the county-wide Historic Resources Survey which promises to be valuable in assisting many groups currently working to preserve historic buildings, homes and other structures. A living history trunk show for children, developed by commission member Patricia Randolph Antonelli, was inaugurated in Cedar Hill.

We are also developing a brochure for Freedman's Cemetery and working on updated tourist brochures of historic sites in Dallas County. Revitalizing the historic square in front of the "Old Red" courthouse as well as assisting the Friends of Old Red in completing the restoration of our county's most enduring structure are among the priority projects.

A proposed Dallas historical organization leadership council is in the planning stages as part of the commission's effort to publicize its programs and enhance communication and partnerships among all historical groups in the county. (See related story on page 5).

These and other exciting historic preservation projects follow on the heels of a new report issued by the Texas Historical Commission concluding that "heritage tourism," a growing segment of the Texas travel market, brings significant economic benefits to Texas cities and towns. The estimate is that these programs result in over one billion dollars in annual tax revenue in Texas. Historic preservation is good! Historic preservation that makes economic sense is even better!

The commission encourages all historical organizations serving any part of the county to take an active role in the commission's projects. Please feel free to contact us with your ideas and comments.

In this issue of the Chronicle the commission is including news from The Sixth Floor Museum, the Pegasus Project, and the upcoming Dallas History Conference. The Chronicle's new format is courtesy of The Sixth Floor Museum.

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*Jeff Dunn is an attorney with  
Butler & Binion L.L.P. and can be  
contacted at (214) 220-3100.*



# A look at historical markers

## Historical Commission plays integral role in marker application process

By Charlene Orr

MARKER COMMITTEE CHAIR,  
DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**W**e've all seen the tall markers standing near places of historical significance and have probably even stopped to read a few. Did you realize that most communities have at least one commercial structure, home, cemetery, church or historical event that would qualify for such designation?

The Texas Historical Commission (THC), the State Agency for Historic Preservation, offers the official program for granting such designations to a community.

Markers currently available from the THC include the prestigious **Recorded Texas Historic Landmark**, which is granted to properties that are at least 50 years in age and deemed historically significant for their architecture or associations; and the **Subject Marker**, which is usually educational in nature and placed at schools, cemeteries, public buildings, church congregations and roadside parks. According to the THC, seventy percent of all markers are Subject Markers. By documenting the community's local history – a church congregation that has been in existence since the community began, a significant historic local event, or the roots of a local Victorian home – the community can draw attention to its historical significance.

Communities in Dallas County such as Dallas, Irving, Mesquite, Garland, Farmers Branch and Cedar Hill have all received these markers and enjoy the added attention the markers bring from residents and those outside these communities.

The process works this way: once local communities, non-profit organiza-

tions or individuals decide to write an application for historical designation, they then must gather reliable information on the subject, write a narrative history and follow the steps that are outlined in the THC marker application packet.

The completed application is then forwarded to the Dallas County Historical Commission, where the Marker Committee checks information to make sure all facets of the application are satisfied.

Once approved through the Dallas County Historical Commission, the application is forwarded to the Texas Historical Commission, where its board

reviews the application for completeness. Upon state approval, the applicant may start planning a ceremony for the marker's installation (although it's best to await the marker's actual arrival before setting a date).

Between January 1996 and January 1997, seventeen marker applications have been approved by the THC for Dallas County sites.

The Dallas County Historical Commission can help with any questions on the application process. For more information, please call Charlene Orr, Marker Committee Chair, Dallas County Historical Commission, at (972) 216-6468.



Photo by Joel Burns

The Dallas County Historical Commission plays an integral role in the application process for historic markers, such as the one above for "Old Red."





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HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

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Rick Loessberg  
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411 ELM STREET, 3RD FLOOR  
DALLAS, TX 75202-3301  
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**A wired eye on Dealey**

Dealey Plaza Cam site gives world a bird's-eye view of the National Historic Landmark District

The Dealey Plaza Cam, a project of Earthcam and The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, debuted June 24th. Earthcam has placed a live Internet camera from the southeast corner window on the sixth floor of the former Texas School Book Depository in Dallas, from which Lee Harvey Oswald is alleged to have fired shots that killed President John F. Kennedy and severely wounded Texas Governor John Connally as the presidential motorcade passed through Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1963.

"We received numerous requests for access for the view of Dealey Plaza

from the sniper's perch. The installation of this camera affords us the opportunity to honor those requests without disrupting the solemnity of the museum experience," said Jeff West, the Executive Director of The Sixth Floor Museum.

The Dealey Plaza Cam will webcast 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the Sixth Floor Museum's web site: <http://www.jfk.org>.

The automated system pans and zooms to capture multiple live views of the historic district and downtown Dallas.



EarthCam/The Sixth Floor Museum

The above image was captured by the Dealey Plaza Cam, which is available 24 hours a day, through the Sixth Floor Museum web site: [www.jfk.org](http://www.jfk.org).

**Next DCHC Meeting**

The next Dallas County Historical Commission meeting will be  
12:00 Noon, Thursday, August 5th,  
in the Commissioners Court, 411 Elm Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor.



# Landmark's lights to shine again

Pegasus Project works to restore historic Dallas icon by New Year's Day, 2000

By Gail Thomas, Ph.D.

CO-CHAIR

THE PEGASUS PROJECT

Although my early years were spent in McKinney, I am a true Dallas native at heart. Our Flying Red Horse brings back many memories of my childhood and the many family trips to "The City" – a downtown filled with shoppers and business, truly the heart of our community. Our Pegasus, the city's red beacon on the horizon, always welcomed me home from my travels. This is a memory I share with many others who have been raised in Dallas and who care a great deal about preserving our heritage.

## History

The young Magnolia Oil Company commissioned the Pegasus. It would be lit in neon and rotate atop its headquarters, the Magnolia Building, in time for the annual meeting of the American Petroleum Institute. The Flying Red Horse was completed in six weeks and ready for the Institute's opening on November 8, 1934.

The sign was designated a city landmark in 1973, the same year that the energy crisis caused the neon to be dimmed. Having grown with the city, Magnolia Oil was now an international corporation with a new name — Mobil Corporation. Mobil moved from the Magnolia Building in 1976 and gave the building and the sign to the City of Dallas. In 1979 the building was sold to investors. To preserve the city's symbol, the sign remained the property of the City of Dallas.

Regrettably, the horse stopped revolving over twenty years ago. The tower's rotating base has rusted and the icon no longer glows. The structure's worn support braces cause the sign to



sway in the wind and the neon tubing that formerly glowed red in the night sky is broken.

## Restoration Efforts

After 65 years of wear and tear, the horses' porcelain-coated steel panels, now rusted and pitted, will not survive being remounted atop the building. With the approval of the city's Landmark and Cultural Affairs Commissions, the panels that make up the horses will be used as templates to duplicate their forms in aluminum sheets. Using the same finishing process as the origi-

nal horses, the new aluminum panels will be fired in one of only two porcelain facilities in the country with this capability, located in West Dallas.

A crane will be permanently mounted atop the Magnolia Building, to lower and raise the horses to street level during the construction period, and to make future maintenance easier. Extra sets of neon will be made for future repairs, and a state-of-the-art rotating system will be installed.

The original Flying Red Horse will be cleaned and placed on permanent display on public property. The city is investigating appropriate locations.

## Fundraising Efforts

A big horse requires a city with a big heart to keep it running. Larry Schnieders, Area VP at Southwestern Bell and the Chair-Elect of the Central Dallas Association, and I have joined forces to co-chair a community-sup-

— continued on the next page.

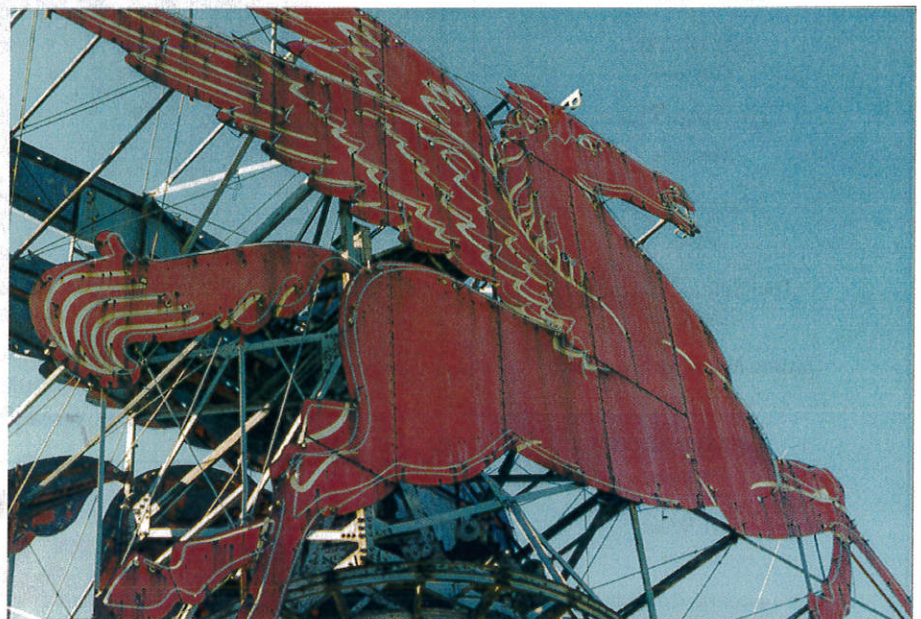


Photo courtesy of Len Garcia-Duran, The Pegasus Project

The Pegasus Project is working to restore the sign, neon lights, and tower of this historic Dallas icon atop the Magnolia Building in time for New Year's 2000.



## Pegasus Project raising funds to restore, relight historic Dallas landmark

— continued from the previous page.

ported restoration effort to save our horse. Our early efforts have been received with enthusiasm by all, including our Honorary Co-Chairs: United States Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and Dallas First Lady Matrice Ellis-Kirk.

Contributors to-date include the Mobil Oil Corporation, our lead sponsor with a \$100,000 contribution, and the Magnolia Hotel Management Corporation, Southwestern Bell, D Magazine, the Hoblitzelle Foundation, the City of Dallas and the Eugene McDermott Foundation. With support from a number of other organizations over half of our fundraising goal of \$600,000 has already been achieved.

We envision this as a community-wide effort and will incorporate opportunities for all those interested in our city's history to be involved, young and old alike. The Dallas Morning News is helping us with a website where we hope to record "Pegasus Stories". Many of us have memories or tales to tell about the Pegasus, and we hope to capture these as part of an eventual archive to be donated to the Dallas Public Library.

With the assistance of the entire community, the Pegasus will be re-lit and rotate again on New Year's Eve. As we end a century that gave birth to many of our city's greatest dreams, it is fitting that we begin the next millenium with the symbol of our city aglow once again, announcing the renaissance of our city's first neighborhood, Downtown Dallas.

For additional information on how you can become involved in restoring our city's symbol, please contact us at 972 978-2997 with your ideas and suggestions. Contributions can be mailed to "The Pegasus Project", 1201 Elm Street, LB39, Dallas, TX 75270.

## Historic council proposed

### A new Dallas County Historical Organization Leadership Council in the planning stages

The Dallas County Historical Commission is considering the creation of an informal council with the objective of improving the effectiveness of (1) non-profit groups in the county that are promoting history appreciation, history education, and historic preservation, and (2) the efforts of the City of Dallas and the county's other municipalities in preserving local history. The council would consist of leaders from historical non-profit organizations located in or serving the interests of any geographic section of Dallas County as well as representatives from municipalities located in the county.

Members of the council would have the opportunity to ...

- Share information and ideas among municipalities and organizations engaged in local history preservation
- Assist municipalities and organizations in forming liaisons and "partnerships" with each another to achieve common goals
- Publicize and promote projects, events, and activities among member organizations and municipalities
- Discuss common local issues pertaining to historic preservation
- Learn about management and fund-raising techniques as well as other organizational issues and project ideas through featured speakers
- Sponsor joint projects that benefit the county as a whole, such as tourist information booklets, historical driving tours, historical markers for hike and bike trails, and other projects aimed at promoting "heritage tourism" in Dallas County

If your organization is interested in participating in the formation of this council please send your organization's name, address, telephone number and the names of one or two contact persons to:

**Rick Loessberg, Coordinator for Planning & Development**  
411 Elm Street, Third Floor  
Dallas, Texas 75202-3301

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*Joel Burns – Editor*

The Dallas County Historical Commission is a county board appointed by the Dallas County Commissioners Court. The Dallas County Chronicle is a quarterly publication of the DCHC for historical groups in Dallas County and the general public. Contributions should be sent to Joel Burns, via email at <joelb@jfk.org>, or by mail to 411 Elm Street, Ste. 120, Dallas, TX 75202.



# Dallas History Conference planned

'The Forces That Have Shaped Dallas' to be the focus of October 2<sup>nd</sup> session

By Michael V. Hazel

EDITOR,

LEGACIES MAGAZINE

Six Dallas County historical organizations are co-sponsoring a Dallas History Conference this fall. Set for Saturday, October 2, the Conference will be held at the historic Scottish Rite Cathedral at the corner of Harwood and Young streets in downtown Dallas.

Contributing to the theme, "The Forces That Have Shaped Dallas," ten local historians will present papers on such topics as the rise of Freedman's Town, the first automobile highways

through Dallas, city planning in Dallas, the impact of the Southern Cause on Dallas, and prominent Jewish rabbis. These papers were selected from more than thirty-five proposals submitted by amateur and professional historians from throughout Texas. Dr. Elizabeth York Enstam, whose recent history of women in Dallas won two major prizes from the Texas State Historical Association, will be the luncheon speaker.

Cost for the day-long conference (including lunch) is \$25. Brochures with registration forms will be sent to members of all six sponsoring organizations: the Dallas County Heritage Society

(Old City Park), the Dallas Historical Society, Preservation Dallas, The Sixth Floor Museum, the Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division of the Dallas Public Library, and the William P. Clements Center for Southwestern Studies at Southern Methodist University. Additional brochures are available for other historical organizations wishing to send them to their members; please call (214) 421-5141, ext. 101.

The Summerlee Foundation of Dallas has provided underwriting for the Dallas History Conference, which its sponsors hope will be the first of an annual series.



From the Collections of the Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

"The Forces that have Shaped Dallas" will be the subject of the First Annual Dallas History Conference, to be held Saturday, October 2, 1999 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Cathedral, at Harwood and Young.