

Lawrence L Reger: Reflections on My Experience of  
Promoting the Vital Importance of  
Collections Care & Conservation

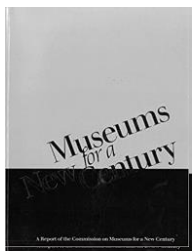
**Introduction to Conservation and Collections Care, Learning Why It Must be a Priority**

My first direct encounter with conservation was the Uffizi Gallery's 1986 exhibition of partially restored paintings, furniture and other works of art that had been damaged by the 1966 Arno River flood. One-half of each object had been conserved and the other left untreated to show the flood damage. While it was a somewhat fleeting encounter, it made a lasting impression.

During my more than eight years at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), its Chairman Nancy Hanks implemented several new funding program categories. Among the first was the Museum Program, established in 1971 under the leadership of Dr. Thomas Leavitt the Director of the Herbert F Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University. Dr. Leavitt was insistent that a special category of funding be devoted specifically to conservation. The program was announced at a meeting of the National Council for the Arts at the Winterthur Museum. This was just one of Ms. Hanks initiatives that she implemented as the NEA's budget was increased from \$9 million in 1970 to \$99.9 million 1977. It was exhilarating, rewarding, and at times challenging to keep up with the pace of increase in support. I have so many good memories of my time at NEA. One memory was when I was at a National Council on the Arts meeting in Tarrytown, NY on Halloween and going out on the lawn of the conference center which overlooked the Hudson River and picking apples with Harper Lee.

In December 1983, during the years (1978-1986) I was Director/CEO of the American Association of Museums (AAM), a seminal report, "Museums for a New Century: A Report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century," was published. (Commission members were trustees and directors of museums and foundations.) The report identified conservation and the care of collections as the most important long-term priority of museums and noted, "The United States is virtually the only major country in the world without a national policy or plan for the conservation of objects in museums." (For a synopsis see <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED256647>. For the complete report see <https://ia801308.us.archive.org/1/items/museumsfornewcen00amer/museumsfornewcen00amer.pdf>

The leadership of AAM committed the organization to promoting the report and the priorities that it identified. A committee was organized to oversee a follow-up publication, "Caring for Collections: Strategies for Conservation, Maintenance and Documentation," which AAM then published in 1984 and distributed widely.



AAM also worked with the leaders of the National Institute for Conservation (NIC) and the Association of State and Local History to launch an effort to support **pilot collections care training programs that NIC administered**. These pilot programs proved to be quite successful.

### **Introduction to NIC/Heritage Preservation**

Sometime near the end of 1986 when I was preparing to move on as CEO of the American Association of Museums (AAM), I received a call from Carolyn Rose, chair of the National Institute for Conservation of Cultural Property (NIC). She said she would like to meet and discuss the possibility of my being associated in some way with NIC. We had lunch and Carolyn was very convincing about the role that NIC could potentially have in strengthening and broadening support for conservation and collections care. I was intrigued, because of what I knew about the importance of conservation and collections care and the need to make them more of a priority of our Nation's museums, libraries, archives, etc.

Carolyn suggested that I attend the NIC Annual Meeting-- which I did. I was taken aback when a prominent Smithsonian staff member suggested that if NIC could not get its basic operational support from membership fees and services, it should consider dissolving. I thought to myself that while income from members must be the basic source of support for AIC, it would not make any sense for NIC to duplicate even part of AIC'S mission of supporting individual conservation professionals.

[NOTE: While it may seem an arcane difference the legal structure of AIC and NIC were different. AIC is incorporated as a tax exempt 501(c) (4) corporation which the IRS defines as a social welfare group. Many professional associations are incorporated as an IRS 501(c) (4) corporation. AIC has an affiliate corporation the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (before 2019 called the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works) that is classified by the IRS as a 501(c) (3). NIC was always only a 501(c) (3) corporation which the IRS identifies as being for religious, charitable or educational purposes.]

I was convinced that NIC could never raise a substantial base of income from member dues but, much like how most "think tanks" are supported, would have to develop a funding base from foundations, businesses, individuals, and/or government agencies. Fortunately, my experience at the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Association of Museums provided me with the basic background and strategies as well as, with the help from many others who supported the goals of NIC/Heritage Preservation to secure the financial support to make some significant accomplishments that are part of this website.

### **Becoming CEO of NIC**

When I accepted the position of Director/CEO of NIC in early 1987, there were two staff members housed in two rooms (large closets) at the Smithsonian's Arts and Industries Building. I do not recall what financial assets NIC had on hand; however, they basically covered my salary, the salaries of the two staff, and miscellaneous expenses. (I have been able to document that, in October 1986, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded NIC a \$250,000 grant to define the needs of the field of art conservation. I assume some of these funds were available to pay staff salaries and other expenses.) However, I understood that NIC resources were quite limited and knew that it was important for me to reach out and meet with others whom I hoped would help us increase our basic operating support and allow us to begin new initiatives.

At my first Board meeting, a member announced that the organization's goal should be to dissolve itself as soon as possible. I hope most, if not all, will agree that it was fortunate that this goal was not achieved and the organization existed for another 28 years. Fortunately, that member's feelings did not deter Carolyn, the other Board members or me from moving ahead.

### **Making the Case for NIC/Heritage Preservation General Operating Support (GOS)**

Making the case for general operating support for NIC to help advance the ambitious goals that Carolyn Rose and other NIC Board members had discussed with me was an imperative that I was anxious to embark upon. With the strong institutional leadership and the excellent body of work that had previously been done by the leadership of the National Conservation Advisory Council (NCAC) and NIC as well as staff who had preceded me, there was no lack of possibilities that could be undertaken. [There are many examples of this work in other parts of this website, see for example, the "History" and "Publications" sections.] The only significant *impediment* was NIC's lack of sufficient general operating support funds.

First, I prepared a summary of NIC's history and accomplishments as well as our goals and examples of efforts we hoped to undertake. I put the emphasis on NIC's need to have a continuing source of general operating support if we were to undertake our ambitious agenda. Carolyn and I discussed how much money to propose. I said perhaps \$100,000. Carolyn suggested \$250,000. As you will see below, Carolyn won!

I had told Carolyn that I knew Congressman Sidney R. Yates and Mary Anderson Bain, his Chief of Staff. Mr. Yates was the Chairman of the Interior and Related Appropriations Sub-Committee, which included appropriations for the National Park Service and Smithsonian as well as NEA, NEH and Institute of Museum Services[later to become the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)].

At AAM's 1984 annual meeting, Congressman Sidney R. Yates was presented with AAM's Honorary Life Membership Award. In his acceptance remarks Yates noted, "We have a National Register of Historic Places and we have legislation protecting landmarks. We still have not taken the steps we should take to protect the historic and irreplaceable objects in our museums." He closed by saying, "The magnificence of our nation's museum collections is incredible and overwhelming. So many museums have great treasures that must be preserved for future generations; their loss would be irretrievable." Working to make this event happen was the beginning of many years of a professional and personal relationship with Mr. Yates and Chief-of-Staff Mary Anderson Bain, as well as with their spouses.

Mrs. Bain would occasionally invite me to her office for lunch at her desk of a bowl of bean soup and a half of a sandwich from the House of Representatives cafeteria. I told Carolyn that I was ready at the next lunch meeting to ask Mrs. Bain about the possibility of whether Mr. Yates would support an appropriation for NIC as part of the National Park Service's allocation.

At our lunch Mrs. Bain suggested that it would be helpful to meet with the staff member of the National Park Service whose office would administer such an appropriation and explain what we were proposing --if Congress approved. I arranged a lunch with the appropriate gentleman, Carolyn and myself. He said that as long as an allocation to NIC didn't reduce the requested appropriation for his department, he did not have a problem with our proposal. The response I took back to Mrs. Bain was that he said as long as the funds were not coming out of the Park Service's yearly request, there should be no problem.

SUCCESS!

NIC's first appropriation is documented as follows:

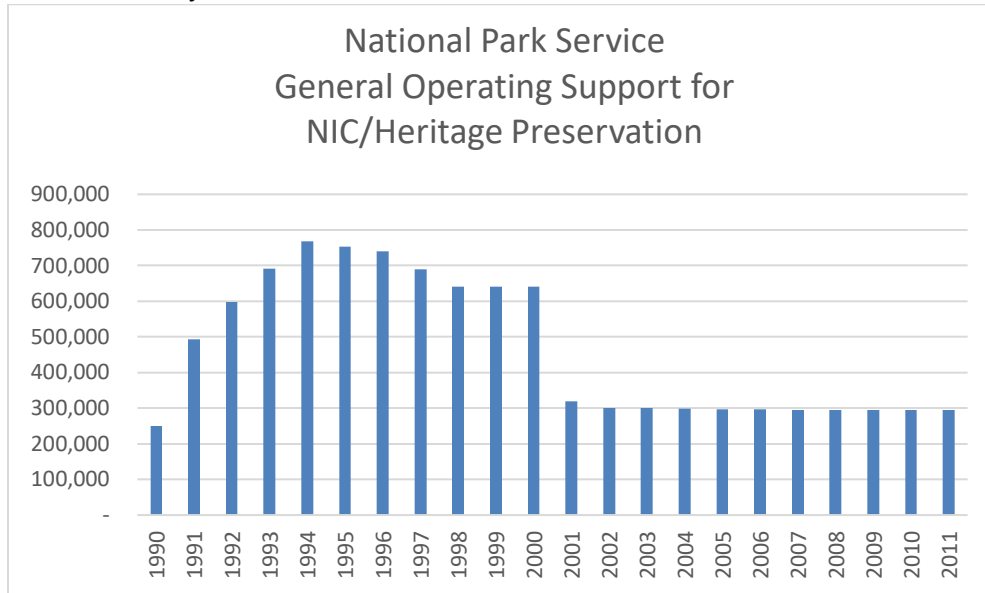
The appropriations of second half of the 100th Congress (FY1988)

"Public Law 100-446 100th Congress, H.R. 4867"

Under the title "NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM":

**"...Provided further. That of the funds provided herein, \$250,000 is available for the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property."**

NIC/Heritage Preservation continued to receive yearly GOS from the National Park Service for 21 years, for a total allocation of just over \$10million.



### **First NIC Congressional Testimony and Its Lasting Impact on Support for Conservation and Collections Care**

I received even better news after my lunch with Mrs. Bain when told my other suggestion about the possibility that NIC witnesses present testimony for a major proposal for increased support for care of collections and conservation had also been approved by Congressman Yates.

We convened meetings to address the pressing need to stabilize vast ethnographic and archaeological collections against active decomposition; and the need to train a paraprofessional group of collection technicians to handle routine collection maintenance activities, thereby freeing up conservators to carry out activities that require special expertise and training. We consulted with national organizations representing art, history and natural history collections about their needs.

The written testimony submitted to the Congress prior to the testimony of our witnesses concluded by requesting a:

#### **NATIONAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

(A) Proposed Federal Matching Support for Capital Improvement Needs

The suggested program was for \$127,500,000 over 15 years or \$8,500,000 per year .

(B) Proposed Matching Program for Support for Training to Improve Collections Care

The suggested program was for \$22,500,000 over 15 years or \$1,500,000 per year .

I remember well going to Kinko's on Capitol Hill some time after midnight several days before the March 22 the date of hearing to make copies of the testimony so it could be distributed to the Congressional members and their committee staff before the hearing.

*Spoiler alert- The proposed "Federal Matching Support for Capital Improvements" was not implemented. However, something even better was. I will get to that later. The quite long repartee between Mr. Nicholson and Congressman Sidney Yates is provided to demonstrate how important Congressional testimony can be to securing success.*

Our witnesses were: Thomas Nicholson, Director, American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY; Raymond Thompson, Director Arizona State Museum, Tucson; and Peter Fetchko, Director, Peabody Museum of Salem, MA. All of the witnesses were persuasive, but Mr. Nicholson especially captured the attention of the Congressional members when he removed from conservation grade storage boxes objects from his museum's collection.

The first was a bronze Tibetan Buddha head with semiprecious stones. (You could hear the audience in the room whisper at its beauty.) He said "...I thought you'd understand why we would collect it." Then, he put a thin conservation grade storage box on the committee table, positioning it just far away enough so the members had to push up from their chairs to see its contents. He said, "I can best describe this as what looks like an old mop cloth." He went on "However, this is the evidence of a society that survived for almost 5,000 years on the coast of Peru and left no written record at all." Late he noted that, "...when this is examined we see within it the details of a very intricately woven pattern that creates two images very similar to the condor bird that you still see represented in that part of the world."

A bit later, Congressman Yates said, "I have a piece of an Inca pre-Columbian weaving that I have hung on my wall. .... I was perked immediately when I saw your specimen because of the designs are very much the same." The conversation between Mr. Yates and Mr. Nicholson made a lasting and ultimately fruitful connection between them.

Mr. Nicholson said, "Correct. But what the designs reflect is the understanding of technology. of mathematics. They left no written record, but they left what they understood and how they thought, how they worked and how they planned." "Which is more valuable? In monetary terms, you wouldn't pay a dime for that but you'd pay several thousands of dollars for this, if you could purchase it. .... But in terms of what this tells us about the human condition, this is it is as important or more important. This tells us about a society about which we can learn nothing except from things like this...." "My point in bringing this to your attention, of course, is just to illustrate what (*is*) in collections like my museum's, like mine, can be multiplied by literally hundreds of textiles from Latin American lands. We have over 15,000 collections of prehistoric textiles from Latin America and South America that date to 1,000 to 5,000 years old. We started a program to conserve this material. I'd say we are smothered by it from our collections."

Mr. Yates asked, "Will the new scholars be able to handle it in order to examine it? Or will they be required to examine it though the plastic?"

Mr. Nicholson replied, "Through the plastic and through microscopes."

Mr. Yates asked, "This is conservation?"

Mr. Nicholson replied, "Conservation of some of this collection. Up until now we have been able to achieve adequate storage conditions and conditions of safe conservation for roughly 25 percent of our

ethnographic collection. ...." [To the reader: you will note that Mr. Nicholson probably did not directly respond to Mr. Yates question. However, this is not unusual and it did not have a negative effect upon what NIC was hoping to, and did, achieve. Those who wish to delve more into the witness testimony can see pages 751 – 758. NiC's written testimony can be found in pages 742 – 750 of the Hearings transcript <https://books.google.com/books?id=m5g0AqZrJm0C&pg=PA752&lpg=PA752&dq=giamatti+yale+university+art+gallery+150th+anniversary&source=bl&ots=zMIBXN4CaK&sig=ACfU3U3NkEyQJ5wLhHwL845Re4JcDUYJ A&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwizqJng7 HuAhWizlkKHye-BnlQ6AEwEXoECACQAg#v=onepage&q=giamatti%20yale%20university%20art%20gallery%20150th%20anniversary&f=false> ]

The request in the NIC 's written testimony was morphed into a substantial appropriation increase to expand what National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Division of Preservation & Access supports even today. Of course, it was NOT for capital expenditures, however, it was and still is the major Federal support to fund collections care and conservation.

The core goals of the National Heritage Preservation Program were incorporated into NEH's budget along with increased appropriations to support it, while the amount was somewhat less than we proposed. Its longevity was acknowledged in NEH's Fiscal Year 1994 Appropriation Request to Congress, which noted: *"In recognition of the singular importance of the country's material culture collections and the magnitude of the preservation problems facing institutions responsible for them, a second twenty-year plan, the National Heritage Preservation Program, was inaugurated in FY 1990 and In the first three years of this new program, awards have been made to institutions nationwide to stabilize collections of over \$21 million archaeological, ethnographic, and historical objects important for research and education in the humanities." The NEH's Division of Preservation and Access continues to provide support as part of its National Heritage Preservation Program through its Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections program.* [See <https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/sustaining-cultural-heritage-collections>]

### **Wonder why "It is No Small Thing to Outwit Time." was added to NIC's logo?**

The front page of the NIC's testimony has the NIC logo, full name "The National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property" and then the phrase "It is No Small Thing to Outwit Time" --which was an effort to succinctly attraction attention to NIC's goals, i.e., to conserve and care for collections for future generations-- because most people outside of the field no inkling of what "Cultural Property" meant. The inspiration for this slogan/catchphrase came from the remarks of A. Bartlett Giamatti on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Yale University Art Gallery. He said: "It is no small thing, but finally sublime, to outwit time and make a moment that can last forever. And it is no small thing to cherish and preserve those moments, those glimpses of our wholeness, in a place which is made to care for them."

A couple of Congressional staff members whom I knew only casually mentioned something to me about Mr. Giamatti's comments quoted above, saying "that guy can really get a point across" or "now I understand what your organization is trying to do".

[The above referred to testimony, can be found on pages 751 & 752 at this link:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=m5g0AqZrJm0C&pg=PA752&lpg=PA752&dq=giamatti+yale+university+art+gallery+150th+anniversary&source=bl&ots=zMIBXN4CaK&sig=ACfU3U3NkEyQJ5wLhHwL845Re4JcDUYJ A&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwizqJng7 HuAhWizlkKHye-BnlQ6AEwEXoECACQAg#v=onepage&q=giamatti%20yale%20university%20art%20gallery%20150th%20anniversary&f=false>]

## **Communicating NIC/Heritage Preservation's Mission and Changing Its Name**

This is how I worked to communicate NIC/Heritage Preservation's mission of improving/strengthening the conservation and care of collections for present and future generations to those who had NO idea or some familiarity but were very busy with other concerns. The solution was to be as brief as possible *before losing their interest* and use analogies to other fields. I usually mentioned one of our programs such as the Conservation Assessment Program which I likened to someone having a general physical examination and receiving long- medium- and short-range recommendation about what to do, only here it was to help ensure that the nation's collections were available for future generations.

My good friends Judy and Peter Kovler invited me to a dinner and preopening tour of the "Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany" at the Smithsonian. There were 40 – 50 guests. The seat next me at dinner was empty as everyone began eating their first course. Not long after a lady came in and sat down. Without skipping a beat, she asked, "What do you do?" I replied, "I am President of the National Institute for Conservation of Cultural Property." She looked closely at me and said, "You sound like you run an agency of former Soviet Union countries!" A bit surprised I replied, "My mother taught me that if I was going to be critical of something, I should have a constructive suggestion to propose or admit that I didn't have one." She in turn smiled and said, "I don't, however, I think we are going to get along fine." It turned out the lady was Madeleine Albright, who shortly after was nominated by President Clinton and became U.S. Secretary of State.

For several years, I had wanted to have our organization's name changed, because if at social events where many guests did not know about conservation of collections, I would be asked what I did and I said, "I am the President of the a) National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property", often the person would turn their attention elsewhere because of the length our name, or because they did not understand the term "cultural property" would respond something like, "Conservation of what? Panda Bears? Forests?." I used my experience with Secretary Albright to try to explain why we needed to change our corporate name. In 1997 the name was change to Heritage Preservation, Inc. When answering "what do you do" questions, I usually left off the "Inc." but quickly said that we worked principally with conservators as well as with other experts to better improve the care of our nation's invaluable collections for present and future generations. It was then easy to explain further what Heritage Preservation did as most people wanted to know more.

## **Developing and Implementing the Conservation Assessment Program (CAP)**

The initial programmatic initiative that NIC undertook was to develop and gain the support of the Institute of Museum Services (IMS) to provide grants to museums for a Conservation Assessment Program (CAP). The CAP used the model of American Association of Museum's (AAM) Museum Assessment Program (MAP) that was developed and implemented while I was AAM's CEO.

Before the necessary background work for a CAP initiative was begun, I met with IMS staff to let them know what we were planning to do and to tell them that I hoped they would consider supporting it. I emphasized that CAP would be for the many small and mid-sized museums and historical societies which did not have the resources for a full time conservator and/or whose collections were not large enough to justify one. At a White House event I had the opportunity to speak briefly with Susan Phillips, Director of IMS about the idea. She was interested but understandably noncommittal.

Initially, we worked in collaboration with the Getty Conservation Institute to develop specific goals and procedures for the museums that would be eligible for a CAP. This resulted in the publication of *The Conservation Assessment: A Tool for Planning, Implementing, and Fundraising*. [The full text can be read here:

[https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications\\_resources/pdf\\_publications/pdf/assessmodeleng.pdf](https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/assessmodeleng.pdf)

The “Fundraising” aspect of CAP was of special importance to me and others working on this effort, as very often conservation and collections care was viewed as a drain on a collecting institution’s resources rather than as something that helped increase resources.

Next, the AIC and the Association for Preservation Technology (APT) worked with us to develop an initial group of qualified surveyors by conducting training workshops at their annual meetings.

I was fortunate to be asked to brief important members of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee and their staff, whom I had met while CEO of AAM, about CAP grants. This resulted in Congress providing additional appropriations to IMS for support to launch the CAP program. CAP has and continues to be supported by IMLS (now the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)). From 1997—2014 the agency invested more than \$14.4million in CAP. Of this, approximately \$10.6million was paid to conservators and, when appropriate architectural assessors, for their services and expenses.

### **Getting to Know Members of the President’s Committee Arts and the Humanities Opens New Opportunities and a Very Important Favor of First Lady Barbara Bush**

Carolyn told me that NIC and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) were to be joint sponsors of the National Committee to Save America’s Cultural Collections (NCSACC), chaired by Arthur W. Schultz, former President, Foote Cone & Belding, one of the largest global advertising agencies. Mr. Schultz was also a member of the PCAH. Andrew Heiskell, former Chairman and CEO of Time, Inc. was its Chairman, and First Lady Nancy Regan its Honorary Chairwoman. The NSACC had the enthusiastic endorsement of the PCAH through the administrations of both Presidents Regan and George H. W. Bush.

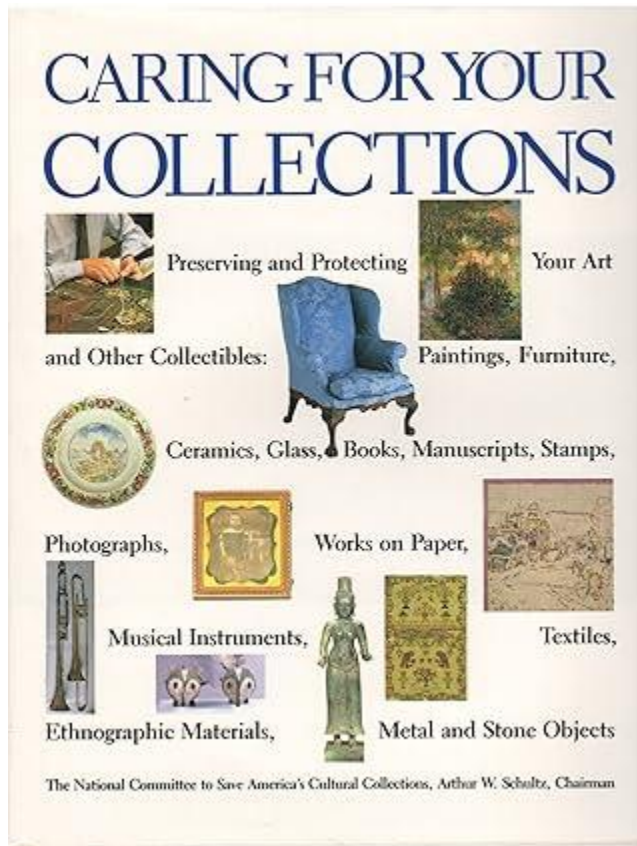
The first initiative of NCSACC was to host two “Save America’s Cultural Collections” forums. The first was held at the Chicago Art Institute. William Leisher, Executive Director of Conservation and NIC Board President, was one of the presenters. The second was held at the Getty Center where Giovanni Agnelli was the keynote speaker. The goal of both forums was to reach decision makers like corporate CEOs and museum board members and get them to work with conservators and other experts to recommend and promote strategies, programs and financial support for the preservation and conservation of collections. One of the most important recommendations of the forums was that national and state organizations cooperate to promote better care of collections among their constituents/members. NIC took a leading role in convening meetings and forums to further this effort.



For NIC, an organization with a staff of only three and scant financial resources to be an integral part of the NCSACC was an opportunity to be recognized as an important resource not only for the NCSACC, but also for the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. It also gave me an opportunity to meet people who would be key to successfully promoting future NIC efforts in the private and public sectors, especially with the Federal government.

In 1990, Mr. Schultz agreed to serve on NIC's Board of Directors. After his first meeting, while we were having wine and cheese, he came up to me and said, "Larry I don't just want to go to Board meetings, I want you to give me one thing to do!" Since Mr. Schultz said that he thought one way to promote increased support for collections care and conservation was to find ways to reach collectors. I told him that there wasn't a book for the lay public about what one could do to care for their collections. I said that publishing one which emphasized the importance of seeking advice from conservators would be the perfect project to pursue. He said he knew Paul Gottlieb, Publisher of Harry N. Abrams, Inc. and that this was something we should explore with him. I told this to Bill Leisher, who had become Chairman in 1989, and he agreed that this was a very good idea.

The next thing I knew was that Art and I met with Mr. Gottlieb, who was enthusiastic about our proposal. Harriet Whelchel was designated as the Abrams editor who would work with NIC staff which included Clare Bouton Hansen, Director, Collections Care; Polly Arenberg, Editor and Migs Grove, Program Director for Communications and Special Projects.



“Caring for Your Collections” was published 1992 and First Lady Barbara Bush hosted a White House reception to honor its publication. Attendees included authors of the book, members of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the National Committee to Save America’s Cultural Collections, representatives from Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and leaders of from the Institute of Museum Services and National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. We submitted names of proposed attendees to Mrs. Bush’s staff. Bill Leisher suggested that his wife and their two children be included. We knew that Bill had a serious cancer and the prognosis was not good. Diane Paton, Executive Director of the President’s Committee, received a call from one of Mrs. Bush’s staff saying that children were not to be included in the guest list. Diane let me know about this and said that I should not worry. She would see to it that the children were invited, and indeed they were.

My recollection is that Diane reached out to Mrs. Bush personally about the children not being included. Mrs. Bush said of course the children could come. At the reception a photo was taken of Mrs. Bush and the Leisher family. Bill passed away not long after the White House reception. Among the photographs at Bill’s memorial service reception, the one of Mrs. Bush and the Leisher family was prominently displayed.

After this project, Mr. Schultz continued to provide me with his thoughts about policy and programmatic concerns that I had. I visited him and his wife several times at their home in Montecito, CA to get his valuable opinions and suggestions.

### **The Beginning of Save Outdoor Sculpture (SOS!)**

While Arthur Beale was Chair of NIC, and before I joined NIC, he promoted an effort that became the impetus for a program to conserve and maintain outdoor sculpture throughout our country. His interest was piqued by his 1984 appointment by the Governor of Massachusetts to a Scientific Advisory Council on Acid Rain on which he learned that nationally acid rain was “...at least one of the causes of the -deterioration of outdoor statuary....”

NIC joined with the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) to submit a proposal to the Getty Trust for an inventory and survey of the conservation needs of publicly accessible monuments throughout our nation. In 1985, NIC was awarded a \$139,000 grant for the Public Monument Conservation Program pilot project. The project conclusions were that publicly accessible outdoor sculptures and monuments needed to be cared for and that their ownership was often unclear.

While NIC was working on the public monument project, the National Museum of American Art (NMAA) was working to expand its Inventory of American Paintings to include sculptures. The museum had received a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to develop and test a data format for recording sculpture. Wayne Craven of the University of Delaware championed the project and lent the records he and his students had amassed over years for the test data set.

David Shute, Director/CEO of NIC and Eleanor Fink, then Director of the Expansion Inventory Program at NAAM, met to discuss the possibility of a cooperative effort. However, I was never able to discover how far along the discussions were by the time I became Director/CEO of NIC.

I vividly recall that shortly after I became Director/CEO of NIC, I got a call from Rachel Allen, Acting Chief of the NMAA’s Research and Scholars Center, suggesting that she and Christine Hennessey, Coordinator

of the Inventory of American Paintings (& Sculptures-- eventually) meet with me to talk about a program to inventory and promote the conservation and ongoing care of outdoor sculptures. Their visit was the first time that I learned about a possible cooperative effort between our two organizations.

They were kind enough to come to the NIC offices where they explained that one of NMAA's highest priorities was to create a database of outdoor sculpture and monuments throughout our nation to serve as an integral record of our country's artistic and historic heritage. They noted that these outdoor sculptures were often owned by city and state governments, schools, churches, and civic organizations, rather than by museums and historical societies, making them harder to locate and record. We talked about NIC's possible role in encouraging their conservation and ongoing maintenance.

Not surprisingly a major issue on the table was what monetary contribution NIC could make to such a partnership. Needless to say, at this point, NIC was in no position to make any substantial commitment. However, I did have an idea and that was the beginning of a very rewarding and long-term relationship with both Rachel and Christine.

I thought, "WOW! " For NIC, this could be an amazing outreach program to involve people who were not necessarily interested in art or history, but would see this as an opportunity to make their community better by having their sculpture and historic monuments which were available to anyone at any time be part of a Smithsonian database. At the same time, the project would help NIC advance its goal of promoting care of collections for present and future generations. When I worked for Nancy Hanks, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, I learned that the media often looked for something positive with which to end their daily reporting after they had bombarded their viewers with the bad news of the day. I felt this was just the kind of effort that would easily attract the attention of all kinds of media and would in turn be beneficial to NMAA, NIC and our constituents.

I discussed our conversation with Carolyn Rose and told her that I thought the partnership with ~~the NMAA~~ would be a great opportunity to develop an outreach effort involving community volunteers and conserving often overlooked outdoor sculptures and monuments. Carolyn said she had heard something about this idea from Arthur and thought it was very worth pursuing-- that is, of course, if the money could be raised to develop and sustain it.

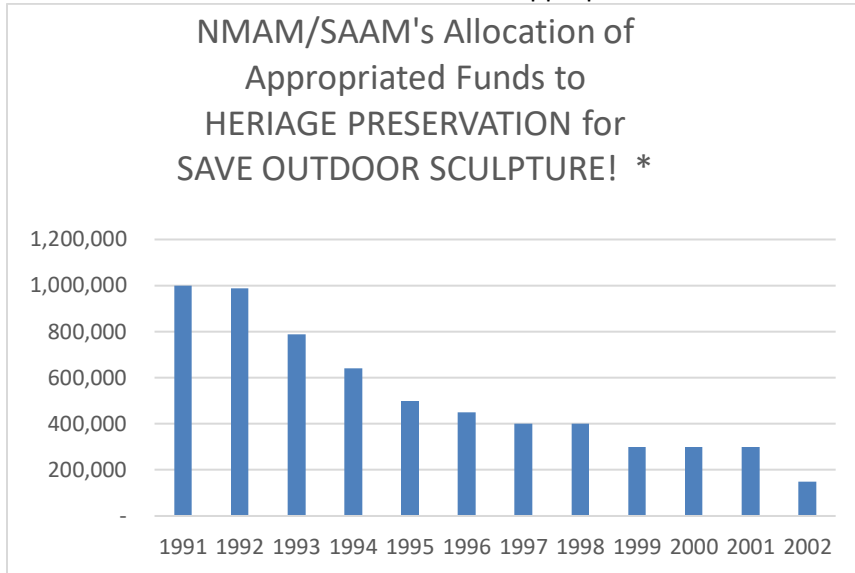
While I don't claim to take all of the credit for naming this effort Save Outdoor Sculpture (SOS!), I did have a hand in it. Again, my experience at the National Endowment for the Arts and American Association of Museums made me aware that it was important to adopt titles that were succinct and descriptive, be they the names of organizations, programs, or other initiatives.

After my meeting with Rachel and Christine, Mary Anderson Bain, chief of staff, for Congressman Sidney Yates, invited me to come to her office for lunch, to discuss how NIC was doing. I took a one-page outline of the NIC and NMAA's joint project to enlist volunteers to inventory and do a basic condition assessment of outdoor sculpture in their community. It also explained that NIC also planned to engage the volunteers in efforts to promote and raise local funds for the conservation and care of those sculptures. Mrs. Bain said she thought it was a great way to reach out to small communities throughout our country and would discuss it with Mr. Yates.

Not long my initial discussion with Mrs. Bain, I received another call inviting me to the Congressman's office to see the 1989 July 4th fireworks. I went with a more detailed description of the project which

proposed an additional appropriation of \$1 million a year to be designated for NMAA above what the Smithsonian Institution had requested to Congress.

The additional \$1million appropriation was specifically designated to go to NMAA for the support of NMAA and NIC'S joint project Save Outdoor Sculpture! Over twelve years, NIC/Heritage Preservation received more than \$6.2 million of federal appropriations for Save Outdoor Sculpture. See chart below:



\* See below for information regarding additional funding included for SOS!

In addition to this sum, more than \$4.8 million in corporate and foundation grants were contributed to NIC/Heritage Preservation for SOS! support, e.g., administration, promotional activities, matching grants to communities for conservation and collections care.

This large and successful public/private partnership involved over 8,000 volunteers who inventoried over 32,000 outdoor sculptures, helping to raise local funds to conserve and maintain America's outdoor art and cultural heritage for future generations. Also, and very importantly, local and national media outlets, print, radio, television, and other venues provided information and stories about the volunteers and the importance of outdoor sculpture to communities and the nation. The SOS! staff collected just some of the print and video features about the program. At least 15 five inch three-ring binders of print materials and many videos are now part of the Smithsonian Archives. Nancy Hanks' observations proved to be "right on"

#### Target and SOS!

I often try to impress on young people beginning or wanting to advance their careers the necessity of introducing themselves to someone they have never met. Most often the experience is just a casual "nice to meet/talk to you." But by "just showing up" you may have the good fortune of gaining a new friend and while less often, gaining someone's help in providing support for advancing your professional goals. Also, you may be of assistance to them. Taking my own advice has served me well in my experiences recounted above regarding meeting Robert Bob Thacker, Executive Vice-President, Target Stores and the First Lady's Save America's Treasures, Southwest trip.

In the summer of 1987 or 1988 I was invited to the National Heritage Fellows Awards that were sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts' Folk Arts Program. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was hosting the presentation of the awards in the East Room of the White House and a reception after the awards in the State Dining Room. A dinner for awardees and guests was held that night in the Diplomatic Rooms of the State Department.

Since it was very warm day and I wanted to get some work done, I thought perhaps I wouldn't go. However, since a very close friend of mine was the Folk Arts Program's administrator, my office was not far from the White House and I frequently told younger staff "half of it is just showing up!", if you are to achieve a successful career, I did go.

While waiting in line to clear security to enter the White House grounds, there were two men in front of me, so I introduced myself and we began a casual conversation as we waited. It turned out that one of the gentlemen was Robert (Bob) Thacker, Executive Vice-President for Marketing of Target Stores and ~~the other was~~ Eric Erickson, his deputy. Not long after our introductions, I glanced back and noticed a woman who worked for an important (to me at least) member of Congress, was approaching and would soon be behind me. She was not the most positive person (toward me at least) but, of course, I introduced her to the two gentlemen I had just met.

The line of those waiting moved ahead and we cleared the first security station and then the second, to enter the White House. During this time we chatted about the warm weather, clear sky, the awards program, etc. For example, Bob mentioned that Target Stores was the principal sponsor of the National Heritage Fellowship awards program.

As we wound our way to go upstairs to the East Room, we got talking about what Heritage Preservation did. When I mentioned Save Outdoor Sculpture!, Bob noted that Target had committed \$4 million and raised another \$2.5 million from its vendor partners to the four-year interior and exterior renovation of the Washington Monument and said something like "perhaps we should consider supporting something like SOS! throughout our country.

*[True confession: entering the East Room there were chairs and the lady with us and I were side-by-side with Bob ahead and his deputy right behind. Since there were only two chairs left in the row as we approached, I "casually" slipped ahead of the lady so I could sit next to Bob and continue to tell him about SOS! Also whether there were chairs or no chairs in the East Room was an indication of the approximate length of time the presentation would last-- i.e., "short." If no chairs and "long," if there were chairs],*

After the awards presentation we went to the State Dining Room for a reception and I told Bob more about SOS! He casually mentioned that I and SOS! colleagues should probably come up to Minneapolis to talk more about what Target might do to help with SOS!

That evening there was a dinner in the Diplomatic Rooms of the Department of State. I introduced Bob to Mary Anderson Bain, Chief of Staff of Congressman Sidney R. Yates and her husband. (I had briefed Mary on my conversations with Bob.) Mary was of Swedish heritage and wouldn't you know it so is Bob. They had a very good chat, Mary gave me and NIC a positive "shout out" and said she would send Bob a Swedish Cookbook that was one of her mother's favorites. As everyone was leaving dinner, I went up to Bob and confirmed his invite of earlier in the day for some of us to come to Minneapolis with a proposal of how Target could participate in SOS!

We arranged a date suitable for Bob and his staff to meet at Target's headquarters in Minneapolis. Susan Nichols and her staff prepared folders to hand out with photos from our ink jet printer of before and after conservation treatment and a budget of \$900,000. Regarding the budget, I suggested we might ask for \$250,000. Elizabeth Perry suggested \$1,000,000, I gulped and said how about \$900,000? As most often the staff was more *prescient* than me. Up we went arriving the night before the meeting and we got together to discuss our approach the next morning. While I often emphasized to others that conservation/collections care was best told by pictures, I started by saying what should each of us say. Susan noted we had folders of before and after conservation treatment and "let's focus on those".

After about an hour and a half of talking with Bob, his deputy and 2 or 3 others, I noted that the folder's last page had a proposed budget of \$900,000\* for marching conservation of outdoor sculpture grants to local communities and support for Heritage Preservation's administrative costs. (\*Approximately 20% was for administrative expenses.) We were thanked Mr. Thacker who said his staff would get back to us.

No more than two or three weeks later a glassine envelope arrived in the mail with just a check with one signature for \$900,000! Susan and her colleagues worked closely with members of Bob's staff to keep them informed of what we were doing and in some cases Target employees in various cities volunteered in helping raise matching funds projects for Target grants. Target was also helpful in generating local media about the projects, which was something we encouraged all local community groups do.

The only criteria or other suggestion regarding selection of allocating SOS! Target funds was a recommendation that they not be used to support for with northern or southern statutes of the War Between the States.

#### Hillary Rodham Clinton and SOS!

In July 1998 when First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton visited the Francis Scott Key Monument in Baltimore, MD, SOS! was honored. The New York Times wrote of Mrs. Clinton's appearance as follows, "The heroic bronze figures on the Francis Scott Key Monument are corroded, and an oar that was once in the statue's supple-looking stone waters is long gone. But standing in front of this beleaguered 1911 monument to the national anthem in a quiet, green square this afternoon, Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke of renewal." <sup>1</sup> An article by Christopher T. George, a freelance writer, noted Mrs. Clinton "...announced that **a total of \$62,250 had been awarded by Target Stores** to help restore the monument in Bolton Hill, as part of "**Save Outdoor Sculpture!**"--**a joint project of Heritage Preservation and the National Museum of American Art**, Smithsonian Institution. The money from Target Stores is being matched by state and local funding ....." <sup>2</sup> (Emphasis added.)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/07/14/us/hillary-clinton-inaugurates-preservation-campaign.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.baltimoremd.com/monuments/key.html>

#### Save America's Treasures

In May 1999, at the invitation of Ellen McCulloch-Lovel, formerly Hillary Clinton's Deputy Chief of Staff, but at that time Director of the White House Millennium Council, where she and Mrs. Clinton created

Save America's Treasures, I joined the First Lady during her tour of the Southwest to promote Save America's Treasures. The following is a description of the trip from the White House archives webpage:

"In the heart of one of Albuquerque's oldest Hispanic neighborhoods, the First Lady visited the Southwest Pieta, a large, multi-colored fiberglass outdoor sculpture by Luis Jimenez personifying the Mexican mythic couple of Ixtaccihuatl and Popocateptl. **Mrs. Clinton discussed the importance of preserving outdoor sculptures in this and other communities.**" (Emphasis added.)  
[https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/EOP/First\\_Lady/html/NM\\_Pieta.html](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/EOP/First_Lady/html/NM_Pieta.html)

In addition to being honored to be present for the Southwest Pieta presentation, I continued on with Mrs. Clinton, members of her staff and other Federal agency staff as well as other invited guests from foundation and corporate supporters of Save America's Treasures for the remainder of the tour. While I already knew that the opportunity to get to know new people and enhance my relationships with others was important, the two airplane trips we took to complete the tour were memorable.

The group first flew from Kirkland Air Force Base to Luke AFB in a troop/cargo plane where we sat aligned on both sides of the plane with our backs to its side with a wide aisle between us. We sat on canvas strap seats and used canvas seat belts to secure ourselves. No one in our group had ever had such a plane ride. Some joked that it might be that we were going to be parachuted out of the plane before it landed. We visited Mesa Verde National Park and toured the collection of pre-Columbian cliff dwellings that were in grave danger from erosion. Mrs. Clinton announced support to help save these national and world treasures.

Finally, we flew back to Andrews AFB on Air Force Two where there was a small office space for Mrs. Clinton and first class seats for the rest of us. Mrs. Clinton joined the group and we talked about our experiences. One thing about the flight that perplexed some of us a bit was that there was no announcement to fasten seat belts on takeoff and landing.

The trip provided not only an opportunity to participate in a special recognition by the First Lady of an SOS! supported project, but also an extraordinary opportunity to spend quality time with friends and colleagues, many of whom were also important to the support of Heritage Preservation. I also met several people whom I had not previously known who became friends. In two instances, they subsequently were responsible for charitable contributions to support SOS!

### **New Opportunities to Use SOS! Experience**

By 2007, funding support for SOS!'s nationwide goals had diminished very substantially and several SOS! staff members had moved on to other opportunities. However, we learned that the History Program of the National Cemetery Administration (HP, NCA), US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was soliciting two Requests for Proposals (RFP). The first was to undertake an ambitious effort to identify, oversee and coordinate a condition assessment of monuments and outdoor sculptures in VA Cemeteries across the U.S. which had been identified by the staff of the NCA 's History Program as most important and/or in critical need of conservation treatment.

The other RFP was for the 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument in Cave Hill National Cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky., which had been carved in January 1862 after the Battle of Rowlett's Station. The RFP included working with NCA Staff, principally its Senior Historian Sara Amy to:



- a.) conserve the original monument in a safe indoor facility,
- b.) move the conserved monument to the Frazier History Museum on a long-term loan and
- c.) select a qualified stone carver to create a modern monument to be installed in its place which would establish a strong visual connection with the original monument so as to continue to honor the remains of the 11 soldiers buried there and the two other soldiers noted on the monument.

**Historical note:** The original monument is believed to be the oldest extant Civil War monument and was carved by Private August Bloedner with the names of 13 fellow soldiers who fell in the Battle. The monument, originally installed on the battlefield near Munfordville, Kentucky, was moved to the Cemetery in 1867. August Bloedner carved the monument from St. Genevieve limestone, a type of soft, porous Indiana limestone that no longer used for sculpture or building purposes. By the 1950s, the monument was beginning to spall and by the early 2000s, approximately 50 percent of the inscription was lost. It is also referred to as the Blodner Monument.

[or more Information re: Conservation and Relocation of the 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument, visit <https://www.cem.va.gov/history/Bloedner-Monument-conservation.asp> , then click "Launch Slideshow" for twenty-three photographs of moving the Bloedner Monument inside for conservation, moving it to the Frazier History Museum, and the carving, Installation and dedication of the successor monument at Cave Hill Cemetery.

For more information re: History of the 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument, visit [https://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/bloedner\\_monument.asp](https://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/bloedner_monument.asp) ]

Moira Egan, Heritage Preservation's Executive Vice President, and Kristen Laise, Vice President Collections Care Programs, worked with other staff members to respond to the first RFP, as it was nationwide in scope and had many complex "working parts". With the help of Heritage Preservation staff who did most of the work on this effort, I volunteered to shepherd the process of responding to the Blodner monument RFP. Heritage Preservation was successful in being awarded both contracts totaling \$965,258. I believe it was on the basis of SOS!'s more than 15 years of experience with similar efforts that we met the requirements of what both RFPs were seeking.

Months before a date was set for moving the Bloedner Monument to the Frazier Museum, my husband Dan and I had planned a trip to Chile with two of our closest friends. The move, of course, took place while we were away. Kristen Laise agreed to go to Louisville, KY to monitor the installation. When we were in Chile at a B&B, where I sat at the reception desk, which had the only available internet connection, she and I communicated by email. At one point, Kristen wrote, "They are moving the Bloedner into the Museum." Her next email said something like they are working to get it over the transom, which has a metal strip above it where the doors close, and it looks like it is tipping!" I thought, "Oh, I hope it doesn't tip over and shatter." The next message from her was something like "Phew, it made it into the museum's vestibule"!

### The Blodner Project Provides Me with a Very Special Experience

My next adventure was a visit to Newport, RI to see Nick Benson who was selected to design and oversee the carving of the successor to the Bloedner monument. Nick is co-owner and creative director of the John Stevens Shop, which was founded in 1705 and specializes in architectural and memorial lettering. Nick's grandfather purchased the Shop and it has been in the Benson family for three generations. We looked at some preliminary paper designs for the new monument. Nick then gave me a tour of **the shop**. It was like walking into a living past. I was amazed at the archive of materials --



beginning with those of the original owner --that were catalogued and carefully stored there. In the work area where stones were shaped and carved several pieces were in progress. . It was fascinating to see. Nick and I went to one of his local restaurants for lunch. Then I headed back home via Newport's "Mansion Row".

Appeopos of Newport, I remember a story that Livingston Biddle, who worked for many years for Senator Claiborne Pell and later became Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, liked to tell about the Senator. A Senate colleague came to visit Senator and Mrs. Pell. Senator Pell went to pick him up from the airport and as they were traveling down "Mansion Row", Mr. Pell pointed a several locations where his relatives had lived or were living. The visiting senator said something like, "Claiborne what did your family do?", and Mr. Pell replied, "DO???" As many know, Senator Pell did a lot and is best, best known for initiating the legislation that created the Pell Grants which provide federal support to students for post-secondary education.

### Rescue Public Murals

I wish we could have had more time to secure financial support for the Rescue Public Murals (RPM) program. Will Shank and Tim Drescher were the instigators of this effort and their leadership, expertise and enthusiasm provided the basis for Heritage Preservation to join with them to secure more than \$300,000 for its support. Its goals perfectly complimented those of SOS! and it was a much needed effort. I am grateful for the kind words that Will says about me, but as Will points out in his "Personal Essay" on this website, Moira Egan and Kristen Laise "...carefully and patiently molded our ideas into an organization that had a direction, a lot of energy, the capacity to attract serious funding...." Of course, they and the other associates before them during my twenty-seven years at Heritage Preservation were always the reason for the success of not only our fundraising efforts, but also of our efforts to improve the care of our nation's heritage for present and future generations!

### U.S. General Services Administration—In-Kind Support, \$528,321

In addition to identifying and securing monetary support for Heritage Preservation, we had a major "in-kind" donation that resulted in the organization obtaining \$528,321 of no cost office rent between 1998 and 2003. The contribution was calculated by Heritage Preservation's Certified Public Accountants as part of our annual audits.

It all began when I and another staff member learned of a program that allowed qualified non-profit organizations to occupy at no cost office space in buildings that General Services Administration (GSA) had under rental contract. Our understanding was that the nonprofit organization had to meet certain requirements . Understandably, GSA also had criteria for which office space it would make available to a non-Federal organization—the length of the GSA'S rental contract, the length of time the space had been vacant, the number of times the space had been shown to Federal agencies, the time left before the lease would expire, etc.

We had a friend from our time at the National Endowment for the Arts who was now Commissioner of GSA's Public Buildings Service. We meet with him to get more information about whether Heritage Preservation might qualify to be considered for this opportunity. After touching base about our past ventures. he gave us contact information for a gentleman at the GSA's National Capital Region office

which provides support to the federal government in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. I followed up and got an appointment with him.

Along with other staff, I went to his office with information about Heritage Preservation's mission, brief background about our programs, several past annual CPA audits, etc. He outlined the criteria that GSA used to make office space available to a nonprofit and mentioned a couple of possible locations. We then arranged to look at space in an office building that was on the southeast corner K and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets, a prime D.C. location. It was apparent that the space had not been occupied for a long time. However, it contained some offices and a considerable amount of open space. We were convinced that it would work for us.

Not long after our meeting we received word that we had been granted approval to move into the space. To the best of my recollection we moved in in the summer of 1998. In 2003 we had to relocate our office as the building was to be torn down.

There's a Time to Do & a Time to Refrain from Doing  
At 85 years old & 10 Years after Dissolution of Heritage Preservation the  
Time has Come for Me to Move On.

Finally, a bit about my good fortune in having a career as the first General Counsel for National Endowment for the Arts (1970-1978), the CEO of the American Association of Museums (1978-1986), and the CEO of Heritage Preservation (1987-2015).

Back to my beginnings. At an early age my principal interests were in history, arts, literature, etc. When thinking about a career, I first thought to become a dentist but realized I would not be good at it. In my Junior semester at the University of Nebraska I decided I would become a lawyer and I went to Vanderbilt University Law School.

After graduation in 1964, I returned to Lincoln and was accepted at a law firm where the two partners had been Nebraska State Insurance Commissioners. My work provided me with the opportunity to go Washington, DC and connect with Federal staff about insurance companies.. While I was there I often "went out on the town to ballet, theatre, museums, libraries. etc. "

One time when in Nebraska, I went to a dinner for an NEA staff member who had given a lecture that afternoon to the Sheldon Art Museum Board and guests. I introduced myself and asked if the NEA might need a lawyer. He replied "I think they might, "Why don't go to the Personnel Office next time you are in DC?" I accepted the advice. The next time I was in DC I spoke to the NEA's Deputy Chairman, who said he would speak to the Chairman.

I got a call about two weeks later and arranged an appointment with Ms. Nancy Hanks, Chairman of the NEA. A week passed and I was informed that I had been selected to be the NEA's General Counsel. When I went to tell my firm's Senior Partner and the two partners I reported to, I was concerned they might not be pleased that I was leaving. It was the opposite. They were proud I that I had been selected.

I served three in different positions during my years of employment with the NEA: General Counsel, Director of Planning & Management, and Director of Program Development& Coordination. This

happened because during the 8 ½ years of Ms. Hanks' tenure, NEA's Federal appropriations rose from \$9 million to \$99 million. Needless to say, this growth required additional staff, training and space.

When I was about to leave the NEA, the friendships I formed there, and what I learned from Ms. Hanks, the NEA staff and many others convinced me that I should find another position in the arts and humanities field, preferably in DC.

For my next position, I was fortunate to be selected as CEO of the American Association of Museums and served from 1978-1986. Initially the Board wanted the organization to focus on lobbying Congress to obtain increased support for all kinds of museums-- art, history, science, children's, natural history-- as well as aquarium and zoos. AAM members throughout our country were selected to inform and lobby their Senators or Representatives and some even provided Congressional testimony. Of course, the AAM offered the other services that most other associations offer such as annual meetings, workshops, support for committees, etc.

What was most important to the future of my career was when the AAM Board of Directors established the Commission on Museums for a New Century. The first recommendation of the Commission's 1984 report was "First, pressing needs concerning the growth and care of museum must be addressed". There are six other recommendations in the widely praised report..



In 1987, I decided to accept the offer of Carolyn Rose, Chair of the NIC/Heritage Preservation to become CEO and served until early 2015. While I am proud of the more than \$39 million that came through our bank account in those years, I am even prouder of the accomplishments that were achieved as documented here.