

# PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

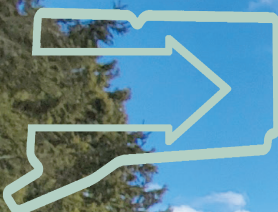
## Connecticut Preservation Awards 2025



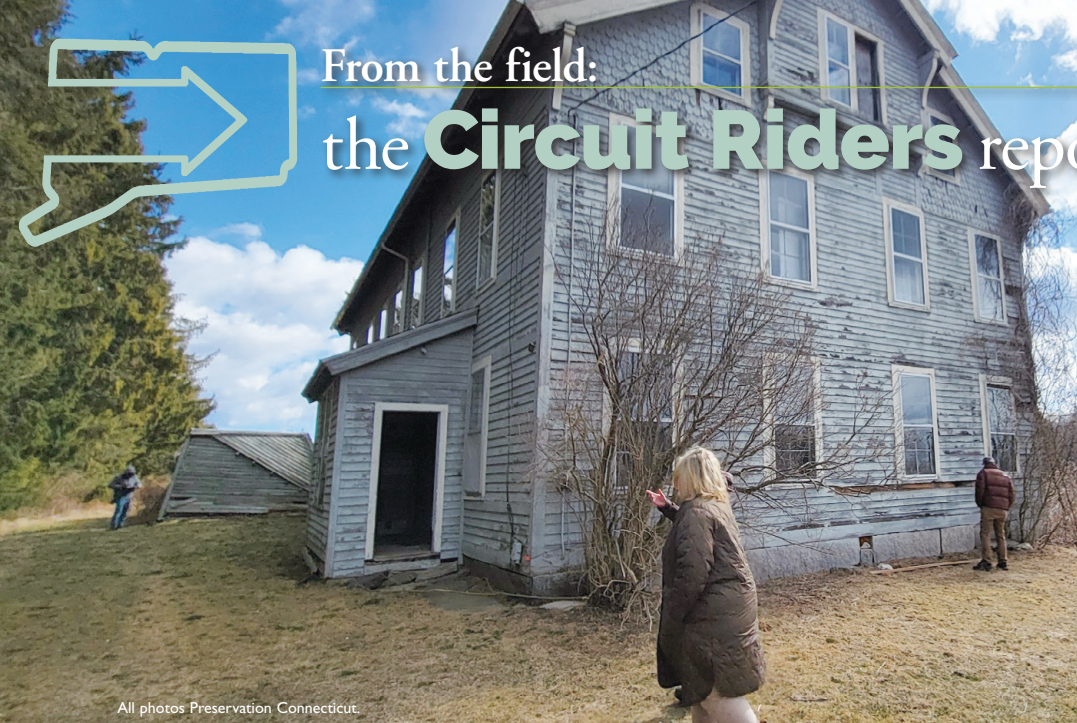
The VFW Cemetery Troopers received a Merit award for restoring veterans' graves in East Haddam.

Irma Carper-Miller, Cemetery Troopers





# From the field: the **Circuit Riders** report



All photos Preservation Connecticut.

Above: Circuit Rider Stacey Vairo visits the former Town Poor Farm Almshouse in Litchfield.  
Top right: Circuit Rider Stacey Vairo and Development & Special Projects Manager Jordan Sorensen visit constituents in Cheshire.  
Bottom right: Field Director Mike Forino meeting with members of the Stratford Veterans Museum

**A**s we celebrate Preservation Connecticut's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we also observe 24 years of the Circuit Rider Program, which has been a vital force in historic preservation, community development, and economic progress in Connecticut. Established in 2001 in collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the program started with one part-time Circuit Rider and has grown into PCT's flagship initiative, comprising four Circuit Riders, plus one Circuit Rider Fellow. Since 2010, the program has benefitted from generous support from our members, benefactors, and the State Historic Preservation Office, propelling it to one of the Northeast's most robust and emulated programs of its kind.

Over the history of the program, the Circuit Riders have conducted thousands of site visits to individual homeowners, developers, nonprofits, municipal bodies, and cultural organizations in nearly every county, city, town, and neighborhood in the state. They've provided crucial support in preservation planning, community organizing, and fundraising efforts. They've empowered communities to oppose unjust demolitions and create essential tools to protect the places that matter to us all.

The Circuit Riders have also secured millions in funding from federal, state, local, and private sources for constituents, listed many notable sites on the State and National Registers of Historic Places,

and promoted the historic preservation movement through educational initiatives, training, and collaborative partnerships. To all of those who have supported the Circuit Riders through the years, thank you!

Here are a few highlights of our recent work around the state:

### **The 1772 Foundation Matching Grant.**

For the 15<sup>th</sup> year, Preservation Connecticut has partnered with The 1772 Foundation to administer their matching grants for historic preservation. Circuit Riders assist applicants through site visits to identify the most pressing issues with their historic structures that qualify for the grant program, ensuring applicants have the best possible project. This year, we received 80 inquiries for funding totaling nearly \$800,000. As always, we are extremely grateful to The 1772 Foundation for their generous contribution to preservation in Connecticut.

**Technical Assistance Consultancies (TACs).** When historic sites face threats, the TAC program, backed by the State Historic Preservation Office, empowers

Circuit Riders to provide quick, targeted technical assistance. Recently, PCT supported the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy and engaged Jim DeStefano, P.E. from DeStefano & Chamberlain, Inc., to assess the structural integrity of a unique 19<sup>th</sup>-century almshouse at the former Town Poor Farm in Litchfield. This evaluation is intended to promote the preservation and reuse of this historically important building.

**Public programs.** In recent months, PCT and SHPO have provided training for historic districts including a well-attended meeting at the Vernon Historic District Commission. This event informed community members and commission representatives about sustainability practices concerning historic structures. Additionally, PCT teamed up with the American Institute of Architects to develop a Primer on Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings and participated in the America 250 Conference at U.Conn., where staff members discussed historic town greens. 🌿

### **Circuit Riders by the numbers: January–March 2025**

Site visits made: **44**  
Communities visited: **43**  
Technical Consultancies: **1**  
Educational Programs: **7**

*Please sign up for Preservation Connecticut's emails and newsletters for information on upcoming public programming: <https://preservationct.org/sign-up>. Let us know if you're interested in having PCT arrange an educational program for your organization.*



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On April 7, a coalition of supporters gathered to celebrate the success of the Community Investment Act and urge support for SB 1522, **An Act Renaming The Community Investment Account The Donald E. Williams, Jr. Community Investment Account and Increasing Its Funding**. Established 20 years ago, the Community Investment Account has exceeded all expectations by making over \$159 million in investments in Connecticut for agriculture/farmland preservation, open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing, directly benefiting every community in our state.

We heard from legislative champions of this incredible program: Senator Cathy Osten, Representative Maria Horn, Representative Joseph Gresko, and Representative Mitch Bolinsky, and from leaders in the individual sectors. All encouraged supporters to share the benefits of the program with their representatives. In the words of Representative Horn, **"This is an investment in the people and things that people eat and the places that they live and the cultures and traditions that we believe in and make us who we are."**

While we wait for this bill to be called for a vote in the Senate, please keep talking

with your local representatives about the benefits of this fund in your community. Especially now, this funding is critical to Preservation Connecticut—and to us all. Visit [preservationct.org/impact](http://preservationct.org/impact) to see a map of impacts in your community.

In other funding news at the legislature, Preservation Connecticut lent testimony in support of **SB 1551, An Act Concerning the Department of Economic Development's Spending on Arts and Humanities** in support of our partner Connecticut Humanities in their effort to secure state funding—funding urgently needed at a time when operating support grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities were abruptly terminated.

On April 10, Preservation Connecticut sponsored, and staff attended, **New Tools for Old Buildings: Historic Preservation Incentive Zoning**, an event hosted by Connecticut Preservation Action, at the Augusta Curtis Cultural Center in Meriden, originally the city library (1903; NR). The program explored how New Canaan, Norwalk and Stamford have developed zoning incentives and flexibilities to encourage historic preservation—a win-win for preservation and development. Not only was the event engaging and informative, but it raised funding to support

CPA's historic preservation lobbyist at the State Capitol.

We continue with our year-long celebration of **Preservation Connecticut's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**. Please join us at one or more of these spring events:

June 11, 18, 25: **Talking About Preservation virtual programs** with guests from the Temple Beth Israel Preservation Society and Connecticut Landmarks, plus reflections on PCT's 50-year history.

June 14: **Preservation Connecticut 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion** with trustees, staff and members at the Whitney Barn, Hamden.

June 28: **Talking About Preservation** on site at the **Mary & Eliza Freeman Center**, Bridgeport.

Lastly, we reflect on the passing of our long-time supporter and friend, **Suzanne "Susie" Salomon** of Bell Island, Norwalk. A patron of cultural institutions in Connecticut and New York, she generously supported Preservation Connecticut for her unabashed love of good architectural design and detail and her desire that our historic places thrive. We humbly welcome her posthumously to our Legacy Society and send our condolences to her family and friends.

—Jane Montanaro



Preservation Connecticut is a statewide nonprofit membership organization established as the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation by a special act of the State Legislature in 1975. Working with local preservation groups and individuals as well as statewide organizations, it encourages, advocates, and facilitates historic preservation throughout Connecticut.

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## Upcoming Meetings

### Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

June 4, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.  
July 2, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

To participate, contact Jonathan Kinney  
(860) 500-2380; [Jonathan.Kinney@ct.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Kinney@ct.gov)

### State Historic Preservation Review Board

June 13, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

To participate, contact Jenny Scofield  
(860) 500-2343; [Jenny.Scofield@ct.gov](mailto:Jenny.Scofield@ct.gov)

Meetings are hybrid meetings, held in person at the State Historic Preservation Office, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

For more information call (860) 500-2343 or visit [portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation/About-the-State-Historic-Preservation-Office](http://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation/About-the-State-Historic-Preservation-Office)

## Harlan Griswold Award for Historic Preservation: Lee G. Kuckro and Anne Crofoot Kuckro

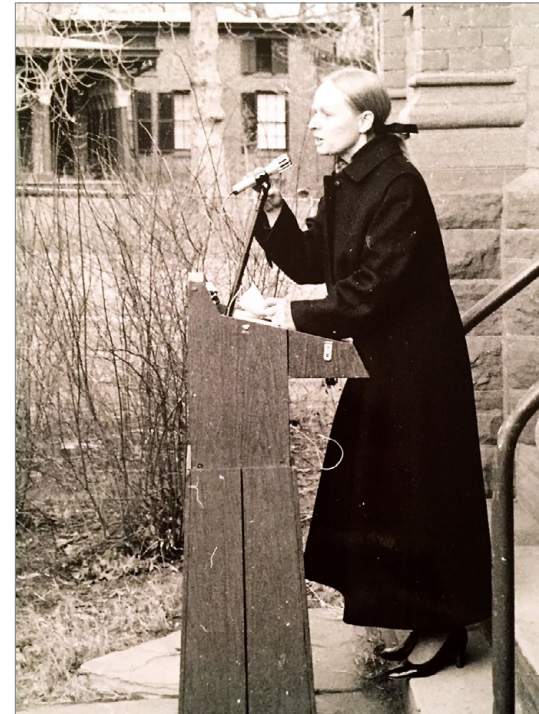
Between them, Lee G. Kuckro and Anne Crofoot Kuckro (who died in 2010) have been at the forefront of preservation activity on the local and statewide levels and in many roles: as public officials and private leaders, in research and organizing, and in hands-on restoration at their own house in Wethersfield. Their story began in 1968 when they bought the 18<sup>th</sup>-century house. It had suffered over the years but, as Anne said, it had good bones. Over the years, they carefully dug into the building's history and into its structure, stripping paint from the brick, recreating lost features, and constructing additions that gracefully blend tradition with modern living.

Almost immediately they joined the Wethersfield Historical Society. Lee was elected to the board and then as president, a position he accepted only if the all-volunteer organization hired an executive director. To fund the position, Anne suggested a house tour—not just any tour but one based on solid historical research. She proceeded to organize it, and many others that followed. Later, she too joined the board, serving as secretary and president. When the society renovated an historic school as the Keeney Cultural

Center, Anne was clerk of the works, coordinating contractors, architects, and others. In the center's education room, she created a timeline of more than 350 years of Wethersfield architecture illustrated with silhouettes of local buildings.

Anne's studies in local history and architecture produced articles and books, beginning with *Capt. James Francis Master Builder: Brick Architecture in Wethersfield before 1840*, published in 1974. Her crowning work, an unfinished manuscript about the history and architecture of Wethersfield's historic district is currently being completed for publication by Wesleyan University Press. In the meantime, Lee edited material from the manuscript to create *Preservation in Action*, published last year. It recounts the histories of ten buildings and how the historic district aided their preservation.

The Old Wethersfield historic district has been central to the Kuckros' preservation work. Lee served on the historic district commission for twenty years, and as chair for fourteen. It is Connecticut's biggest local district and one of its oldest, and many issues have arisen there before they surfaced in other places. This inspired Lee, along with State Historic Preservation



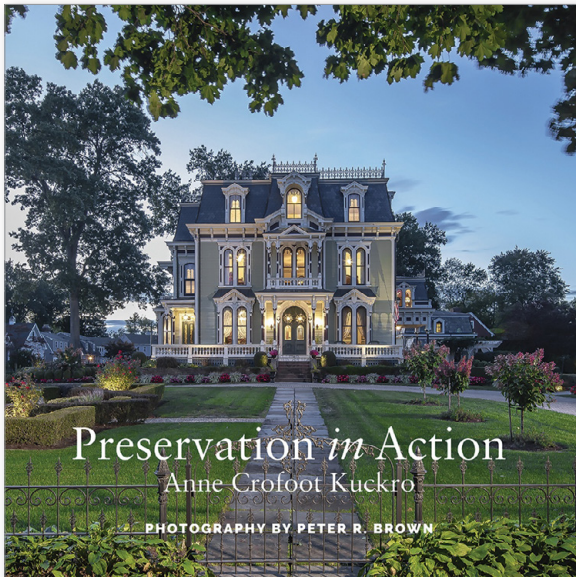
Courtesy of Lee Kuckro

Anne Crofoot Kuckro speaking at the dedication of the Wethersfield Historical Society's Keney Center, which was restored under her management.

Officer John W. Shannahan and commissioners from Litchfield and Farmington, to found the Association of Historic District Commissioners, so commissioners from

*Preservation in Action*, written by Anne Kuckro and edited by Lee Kuckro, highlights preservation Wethersfield's historic district.

Wesleyan University Press, photograph by Peter R. Brown.



Lee Kuckro (center) leads a tour of Wethersfield as part of a statewide workshop for historic district commissioners.

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across the state could share experiences and advice. Lee also was a member of the Governor's task force that paved the way to reduce the voting requirement for local historic districts from three-quarters to two-thirds of property owners.

Anne supported the historic district commission by ensuring that surveys remained updated, procuring funds for updates, and providing up-to-date information on buildings as needed. Lee points to the Wethersfield historic district as evidence that preservation can foster livable communities for a wide variety of people.

As part of her commitment to sharing Wethersfield's history, Anne also worked with local educators to develop elementary and high school curricula on Wethersfield architecture and taught a continuing education class on the town's buildings. Beyond Wethersfield, she worked in the 1970s as Director of the Hartford Architecture Conservancy's survey of the City of Hartford, producing as her second book *Hartford Architecture, Volume One: Downtown*.

In 1997, after the Hartford Architecture Conservancy failed, Lee was a leader in founding the Hartford Preservation Alliance—a name chosen as a reminder that Hartford's vitality is important to other communities, too. He remained on HPA's board for twelve years, completing three terms as president.

In addition to the historic district task force, Lee promoted preservation statewide as a trustee and chairman of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation (now Preservation Connecticut). Under his leadership, the organization reduced its debt and launched the Circuit Rider program, which brings preservation professionals into communities directly.

At another statewide organization, Connecticut Landmarks (formerly the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society), Lee again served as a trustee and president. He urged stewardship of the Society's Forge Farm and chaired the Palmer-Warner House Committee, which laid the groundwork for repairs and reinterpretation of the home of pioneering restoration architect Frederic Palmer and his partner, Howard Metzger.

To these and many other accomplishments, Lee, an attorney, brought his atten-

*continued on page 13*

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## Mimi Findlay Award for Young Preservationists: Morgan Bengel

In 2016, Morgan Bengel came to Connecticut to pursue her master's degree in public history at Central Connecticut State University. It was here that she quickly fell in love with New England's history and architecture. While pursuing her degree, Morgan worked at the New Britain Museum of American Art where she helped students use art to understand concepts such as engineering and architecture. In an internship at the State Historic Preservation Office she archived documents and learned about plans to re-open the Old New Gate Prison and Copper Mine in East Granby, which had been closed for a nine-year stabilization and restoration project. That inspired the capstone project for her degree, a redesign of the prison's outdoor exhibit labels.

After receiving her degree, Morgan was hired in January 2018 as the site manager at New-Gate. There, she coordinated work to prepare the site for its opening in July. In six months' time she oversaw building maintenance, infrastructure improvements, and exhibit preparation. In addition, she



facilitated community conversations and presentations to recruit volunteers and raise awareness of the site.

Since the opening, Morgan has initiated an evaluation of the property's

copper mine and worked with biologists from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to protect endangered bats that live in the mine—balancing the not-always compatible needs of historic site preservation, public access, and wildlife conservation. She has overseen the creation of a digital LiDAR scan to document the mine's tunnel networks, started a geotechnical report which will monitor rock and timber movement throughout the mine, and begun the process of restoring the historic Viets Tavern, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century tavern across the road from the prison.

Working with seasonal staff, volunteers, and interns on a variety of projects, Morgan's efforts have awakened visitors to the rich history of Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine and are to be admired and celebrated as a victory for our state's cultural heritage. Her hard work and dedication demonstrate her promise as a rising professional in her field. 🌿

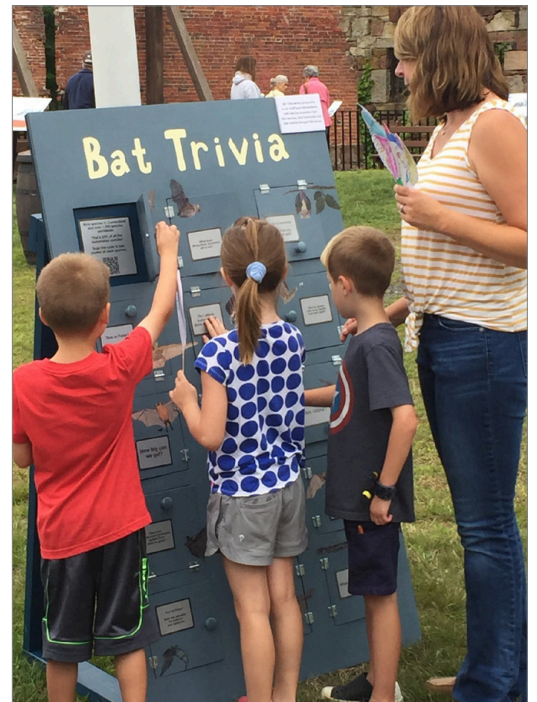
Morgan Bengel (at left) oversaw the reopening of Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine after restoration.

Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine



Protecting and educating the public about the copper mine's bat population have been an important part of Morgan's work.

Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine





## Mimi Findlay Award for Young Preservationists: Christina Volpe

As the curator and site administrator of the Barnes Homestead Museum in Southington, Christina Volpe promotes understanding and preservation of historic places by bringing material culture to life through storytelling, digital interpretation, and public programming.

Christina came to the Barnes after working at a private cultural resources firm where she gained experience in cultural resources recordation and historical investigation for planning, environmental review, and architectural survey documents. She has prepared historical reports and inventories and has archived collections related to historic architectural resources and sites.

The Barnes Museum occupies the home to three generations of the Barnes family from 1836 to 1973, bequeathed to the Town of Southington as a museum. In her work there, Christina oversees and manages collections and creates permanent and temporary exhibitions.

When expansion of the museum's parking area revealed remnants of a cellar foundation, Christina initiated archaeological investigations to confirm that it



was the location of a local clockmaker. She documented this work along with local clockmaking history in an article, "Southington's Clockmaking Legacy," published in *Southington Magazine*.

Christina also has collaborated on researching and interpreting the history of the Underground Railroad in Southington and taken this history to the broader

community through her "History Pints" programs in local breweries as well as presentations to local schools. Along with Town Historian Phillip Wooding, Christina created interpretive signs for the site of the home of Carlos Curtiss, a local abolitionist.

In addition to her work, Christina brings her commitment to preservation to the public through lectures about the importance of preserving historic buildings and artifacts and through community service. Elected to the Southington Planning and Zoning

Commission in 2019 and serving until 2023, she helped to shape the built environment of her hometown and advocated for the protection of historic resources.

Christina is currently studying to complete her Ph.D. in Humanities at Salve Regina University while remaining a fervent advocate for historic places in her town. 🌿

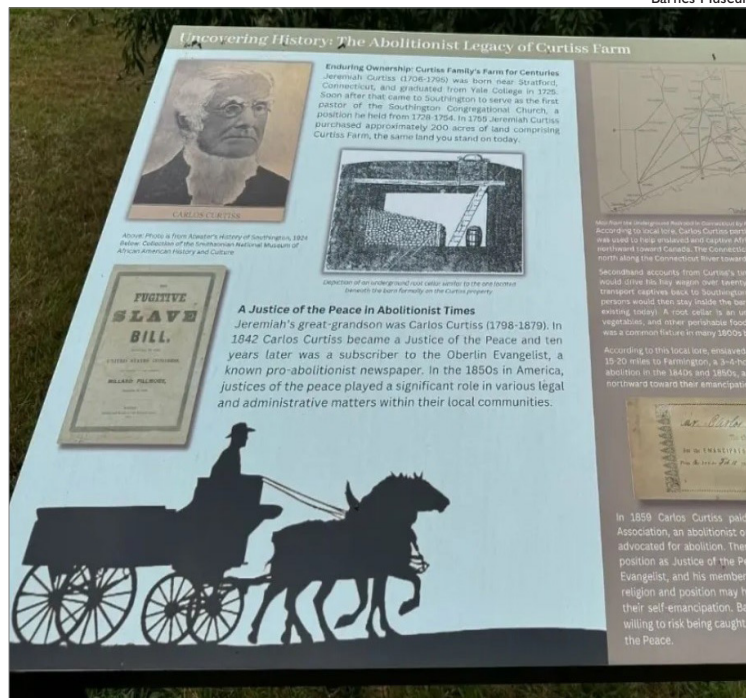
Christina Volpe leads a tour at the Barnes Museum in Southington.

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Christina worked with Town Historian Phillip Wooding on interpretive signage to commemorate the home of Carlos Curtiss, a local abolitionist.

Barnes Museum





# Preservation Connecticut Awards of Merit 2025

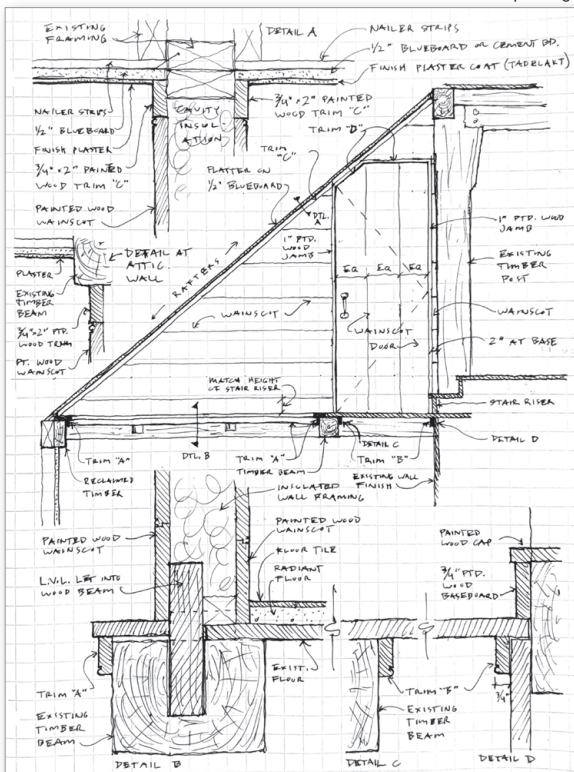
Awards of merit, nominated by members of Preservation Connecticut, recognize outstanding efforts in the preservation and enhancement of historic places throughout Connecticut, with the goal of inspiring others to take similar action. Here are this year's recipients:

## Award of Merit: Pond-Weed house, Darien

Meticulous research and careful planning were the driving force behind the restoration of this early 18<sup>th</sup>-century house by artist Ellen Fagan and her son, Christopher, an architect. The ancient saltbox had suffered neglect and vacancy and was made vulnerable to demolition by its location on the busy Post Road. The Fagans commissioned a dendrological study that determined the house's construction date—1728—and dug into the lives of past occupants, including at least one enslaved person. Chris Fagan carefully examined construction details and artifacts and made drawings of the building and key details. Ground-penetrating radar identified foundations of long-lost outbuildings so they could be avoided when digging for utilities. All of this information made it possible to retain original materials, source sustainable replacements where necessary, and provide systems that make for comfortable living.

*Project team: Ellen Hackl Fagan; Christopher Fagan; Kronenberger & Sons Restoration; Robert Woodside, Town of Darien.*

Christopher Fagan



Pond-Weed house, Darien



Linus Plimpton house, Hartford

## Award of Merit: Linus Plimpton house, Hartford

Built in 1863 and remodeled about 1884, this remarkable house has been rehabbed twice. In 1991, it provided supportive transitional housing for people in need. After 30 years of heavy use it is once again a family home. The work reclaimed beautiful original details including decorative wood floors, stained-glass windows, six fireplaces, and elaborate millwork, while adding modern amenities like new heating, air conditioning, and electrical systems. Each room is different but of particular note are the entry hall, dining room, and billiard room where historic wall and ceiling paintings survive. To improve marketability, two rental apartments were created, supplementing the large owner's unit. This project continues NINA's long-running record of creating or renovating housing to revitalize the Asylum Hill neighborhood. As a sign of its success, the completed house recently sold to a private owner-occupant for more than the asking price.

*Project team: Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, Inc.; NINA Properties, LLC; Crosskey Architects, LLC; James K. Grant Associates; John Canning & Company, Ltd.; Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office; City of Hartford Department of Development Services; Capital Region Development Authority; Local Initiatives Support Corporation; Hartford Insurance Group, Inc.*

## Award of Merit: VFW Cemetery Troopers, East Haddam

When the members of East Haddam/Moodus Memorial VFW Post 3336 set out to identify the grave of every local resident who had served in the military, they found that the town has no fewer than 23 cemeteries. Many were neglected, with gravestones covered by lichen, stained, broken, even buried. After creating a database of more than 1,000 entries, post members formed the East Haddam Cemetery Committee—better known as the Cemetery Troopers—to restore veterans' graves. With training from conservator Jonathan Appel, the group has cleaned thus far 287 stones, removing decades



Patrick Kenny, Lexington Partners



Abner Hotel (Litchfield County courthouse)

### Award of Merit: Abner Hotel (Litchfield County courthouse), Litchfield

In 2017, after 250 years of legal tradition, the State of Connecticut vacated the Litchfield Courthouse. The Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust purchased the property to preserve the historic structure that is key to Litchfield's identity. Determined to find a new use for the building GLPT commissioned a feasibility study and then contracted with experienced developers, Lexington Partners of Hartford, to adapt the courthouse as a boutique hotel and restaurant. The project faced many challenges: providing parking on a limited site—which included negotiations with the U.S. Postal Service; amending town zoning to allow hotels; and obtaining design approvals from the local historic district commission and the National Park Service (even a redesign after the NPS changed its mind about the first version). Protected by an exterior preservation easement and opened in September 2024, the renovated courthouse now welcomes guests and diners to the heart of historic Litchfield.

*Project team: Lexington Partners; Tecton Architects; Innoconn Construction Management; Bohler Engineering; Consoli Bortolan Law Group; Alter, Pearson & Hope; Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust, Inc.; Gregory Farmer; United States Postal Service; Borough of Litchfield Historic District Commission; Town of Litchfield; Attorneys Cramer & Anderson, LLP*

of surface decay. They have reset and straightened 169, epoxied 85 broken stones, and recreated bases for eight. The group enjoys broad community support; local groups and individuals have sponsored fundraisers, given cash, or donated supplies and equipment, plus a trailer for transporting it, but the labor is all volunteer—a priceless gift to the community. (Photo, page 1)

*Project team: East Haddam/Moodus Memorial VFW Post 3336; Don Henson, Bernie Begin, Wayne Cranford, Irma Carper-Miller, John Dannecker, Kris Dannecker, Dave Balcom, Karl Jens, Bernie Miller, Ken Beatrice, Eric Badrick, Forrest Anderson, Kyle Dietz, Jonathan Favreau, Deb Denette*

Architectural Preservation Studio



New Canaan Playhouse, New Canaan

### Award of Merit: New Canaan Playhouse, New Canaan

The New Canaan Playhouse has a long history as a key community asset. Built in 1923, it was the first project of the Village Improvement Society, and its Colonial Revival design set the tone for further downtown development. In 2000, when many theaters were closing, the Town bought the building as an acknowledgement of its importance to the life and economy of New Canaan. The playhouse closed during the Covid pandemic in 2020 but has now been reopened following complete renovation and transfer to a new operator, Cinema Lab, a group whose mission is to revitalize small-town movie theaters. In addition to showing films, the playhouse also offers expanded food and beverages, a pub-style restaurant, a members' lounge, and facilities for meetings and events. It just goes to show that combining historic design and economic development is nothing new.

*Project team: Town of New Canaan; Cinema Lab; Architectural Preservation Studio, DPC; Lawrence Mechanical; Fuss & O'Neill, Inc.; Foodservice Facilities International; SH Acoustics; Lighting Affiliates; Alden Bailey; Darien Electric; Eastern Mechanical Services, Inc.; EOMAC; Strong Tech; Nova; Strong Technical Services; Security Solutions; Skeie Seating; Singer Equipment; Rivers Edge Woodworks; Sillman Meyer Co.; Indy Cinema Group; Film Fog; DNA Design*

### Award of Merit: Mills house, Westport

Containing only 930 square feet of low-ceilinged living space and vacant through seven years of bankruptcy proceedings, this little house might have been doomed. Only its oddly shaped 33-by-300-foot lot saved it from being yet another teardown in high-priced Westport. Despite these drawbacks, as well as its "disgusting" condition, local business owner Annette Norton bought the house in 2021. Working with contractor Javier Pasato, she shored up the foundation and retaining wall, removed an underground oil tank, repaired siding and trim, replaced rotting exterior doors with salvaged antiques,

*continued on next page*



*Awards of Merit; cont'd from page 9*

and added extra windows in a sympathetic design for more light inside. Interior work included removing sheetrock to expose ceiling beams and combining two closets to make a bathroom. Finally, Ms. Norton restored the adjacent 19<sup>th</sup>-century barn, which now provides storage for her shop.

*Project team: Annette Norton; Javier Pasato*



## **Award of Merit: Murray on Main (H.C. Murray building), Willimantic**

After a decade-long, on-again-off-again preservation saga, this former department store now offers needed affordable housing. When bought by a developer in 2014 the building had been vacant for many years and suffered significant water damage. Even with stabilization work it continued to deteriorate after that developer backed out. Finally, the nonprofit Chrysalis Center acquired the property in 2021 and completed the work, utilizing State and Federal historic rehabilitation tax credits. The building now offers 16 apartments plus a community room, retail, and office space on the first floor. New aluminum-clad wood windows replaced deteriorated units, an aluminum storefront better matches historic imagery, and a decorative aluminum cornice matches the original profiles. Inside, historic pressed-metal ceilings, a true character-defining feature, were restored or reproduced where not salvageable, adding distinction to public and residential spaces alike.

*Project team: Chrysalis Center Housing Development Corporation; Northeast Connecticut Community Development Corporation; Crosskey Architects LLC; Enterprise Builders, Inc.; CHA Consulting, Inc.; James K. Grant Associates; Acorn Consulting Engineers; Eagle Environmental, Inc.; Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office; National Park Service; Connecticut Financial Housing Authority; Connecticut Department of Housing*

Murray on Main (H.C. Murray building), Willimantic

Ian Christmann





### Award of Merit: First Church of Christ, Woodbridge

Careful research and painstaking precision resulted in a feat of skillful illusionism. In 2016, two attic beams at the First Church failed, causing the plaster ceiling to pull away from its supporting lath. After structural and plaster repairs, the church embarked with John Canning and Company on a multi-phase restoration of the sanctuary's decorative paintings. The company began with research and paint investigation to understand the history of the paintings, first created in 1891 and modified over the years. After determining the original color scheme and considering the movement of natural light through the day, artists formulated a restoration scheme that restored the illusion of three-dimensional architectural moldings and medallions embellished with scrolling leaves. Modifications to suit the church's current needs were made while leaving the original decoration intact underneath and accessible for future generations.

*Project team: First Church of Christ; John Canning & Company, Ltd*



First Church of Christ, Woodbridge

### Award of Merit: Academy building, Woodstock Academy, Woodstock

An independent day and boarding school that also acts as the high school for Woodstock and neighboring towns, the Woodstock Academy moved in 1873 into a new building that still serves as its centerpiece. Originally housing classrooms and a library as well as boarding students and the Head of School's family, the building was renovated numerous times as needs changed. The most recent restoration focused on repairing leaks and structural inadequacies, providing accessibility and meeting code requirements. In

addition, the clock tower was refurbished and surviving historic finishes were restored—particularly in the two-story Academy Hall, where a new glass-railed bridge provides access to upper

level rooms—and a museum room was created for the historic clock mechanism and displays recounting the school's history. Reflecting the school's civic role, donations from the larger community demonstrated broad support for the work.

*Project team: The Woodstock Academy; Juster Pope Frazier architects; Kronenberger and Sons Restoration*



The Woodstock Academy

Academy building, Woodstock Academy, Woodstock

*continued on next page*



*Awards of Merit, cont'd from page 11*

## Honorable mention: Grupes house, New Canaan

After ten years of negotiations, the New Canaan Land Trust acquired the historic Grupes house from the First Taxing District Water Department of Norwalk, which had threatened to demolish the dwelling. Through patient and persistent efforts, assisted by New Canaan's First Selectman, a deal was reached to carve out the homestead on a 1.8-acre parcel that adjoins an existing eleven-acre Land Trust preserve. The organization plans to use the property as its headquarters and conservation learning center, as well as a residence for its executive director.

*Project team: New Canaan Land Trust; Town of New Canaan; First District of Norwalk Water Department; Tom Nissley; New Canaan Preservation Alliance; New Canaan Museum & Historical Society*



Grupes house, New Canaan

New Canaan Land Trust

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## Honorable mention: James Dwight Dana house, New Haven.

Yale University's renovation of the James Dwight Dana house not only restored the Italianate villa's architectural integrity but also upgraded it to meet 21<sup>st</sup>-century accessibility, sustainability, and academic needs. Upgraded building systems and envelope improvements meet LEED Gold standards while preserving features such as fireplaces, stained glass, and ornate woodwork. Site work included preservation of existing trees—notably one 400-year-old sycamore—demonstrating the care given to this National Historic Landmark, home of a groundbreaking geologist, mineralogist and naturalist.

*Project team: Yale University; Petra Construction Corporation; Apicella + Bunton Architects*



James Dwight Dana house, New Haven

Heritage Landscapes LLC

## Honorable mention: Mill Hill landscape, Norwalk.

Landscape improvements enhance community experience of and access to Mill Hill, site of Norwalk's historic jail-house, meeting house, cemetery, and a barn—a scenic site depicted in early artworks. The project opened the hillside and connected it to the broader community by clearing invasive species, stabilizing the steep hillside, creating universal access ramps, planting wildflowers and grasses, integrating stormwater management and installing interpretive signs. The project integrates preservation and contemporary use in a scenic and historic site.

*Project team: Heritage Landscapes LLC; Norwalk Historical Commission; GNCB Consulting Engineers, .P.C.; Cabezas DeAngelis Engineers and Surveyors*



Mill Hill landscape, Norwalk



tion to detail and analytical thinking, while Anne brought an artist's eye for design and her careful scholarship.

Preservation Connecticut and the State Historic Preservation Office present the Harlan Griswold Award to honor outstanding contributions to the preservation and revitalization of Connecticut's historic places in memory of Harlan Griswold, the longtime chair of the Connecticut Historical Commission, forerunner to the present-day Historic Preservation Council, and a founder of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

Despite its seeming focus on the past, preservation is an essentially forward-looking activity. As Harlan Griswold said, "To me, preservation is more about my grandchildren than about my grandparents." In their devotion, energy, and accomplishments, Lee and Anne Kuckro have exemplified that attitude. In Wethersfield, in Hartford, and across the state, they have built a better future for Connecticut's grandchildren. We are honored to present the Harlan H. Griswold Award for their outstanding contributions to preservation in Connecticut. 🌿



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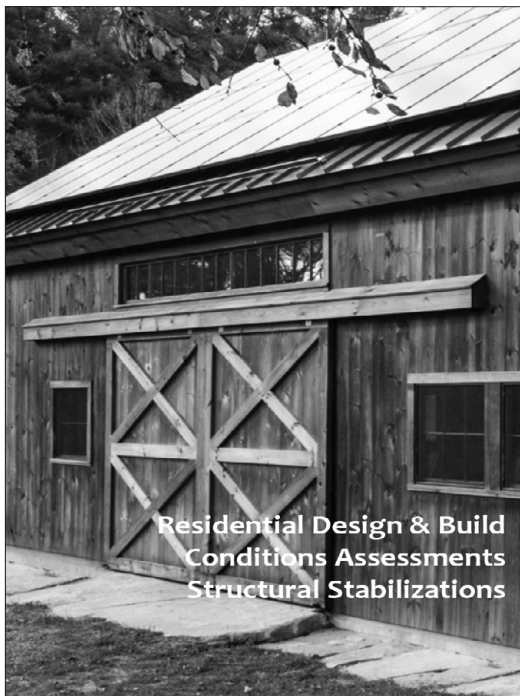


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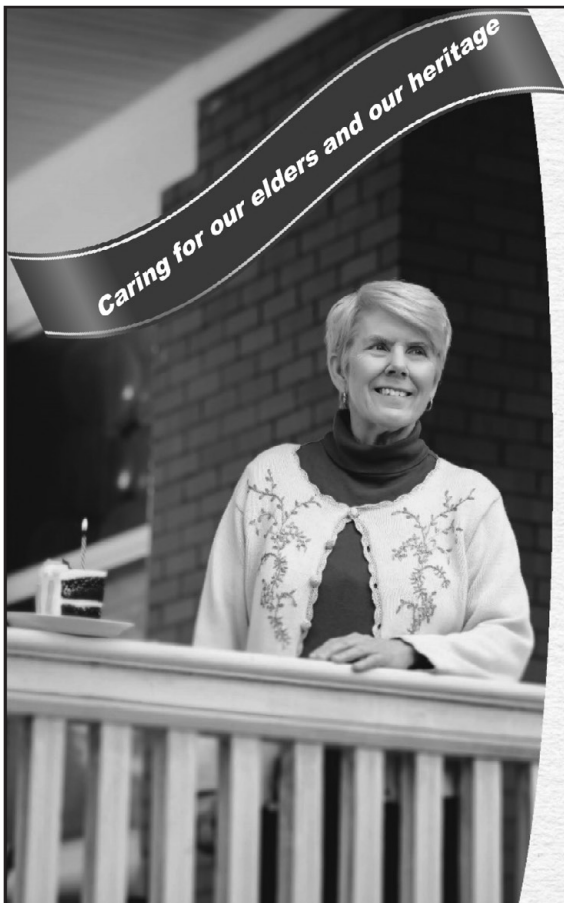


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**Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — May/June 2025**

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easements is on the market, we may list it here. To learn how to safeguard your property for future generations through an easement, explore Stewardship on our website, [preservationct.org/steward](http://preservationct.org/steward), or contact Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director.

## **Saint Mark Lutheran Church 248 Broadway, Norwich (1959) \$990,000**

Saint Mark Lutheran Church available for purchase. The congregation, formed in 1957 as merger between Norwich's German and Swedish Lutherans, is now relocating to downsize. Mid-Century Modern building by prominent architect John Johansen is noted for its parabolic and conoidal precast concrete shells; in addition to the sanctuary the building includes offices, kitchen, and meeting rooms. Building area: 12,178 sq. ft.; 2.41 acres.

**Contact: Norm Peck, Signature Properties, (860) 460-9757, [npeck@propertiesct.com](mailto:npeck@propertiesct.com)**

## **Lorraine Manufacturing Company mill 82 Mechanic Street, Pawcatuck (c. 1878, c.1920, c.1940) \$4,900,000**

Redevelopment opportunity of historic textile mill on Pawcatuck River. Built by Moss Manufacturing Company for cotton goods production. Later occupants include Crefeld Mills Corporation, Lorraine Manufacturing Company (both manufacturing textiles), Hamilton Propellor, Boston Wire Stitcher Co. (staplers), and the final occupant, Yardney Electric Corporation (batteries). This property is listed in Preservation Connecticut's Mills: Making Places of Connecticut industrial survey and located in the Mechanic Street National Register Historic District, which makes it eligible for both State and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Building area is 160,032 sq. ft.; 12.42 acres.

**Contact: Brad Ferguson, Kayla Group LLC, (860) 599-0123**



### **Deadline for the next issue is June 20, 2025**

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## Waterbury Union Station 389 Meadow Street, Waterbury (1909)

**\$4,950,000**

Redevelopment opportunity for historic "Waterbury Clocktower Building." McKim, Mead and White, the nation's leading architectural firm at the time, designed this local landmark in the Renaissance Revival style, with a clocktower modeled on the 14th-century city hall in Siena, Italy. As use of the rails declined, the building was repurposed in 1952 as headquarters for the Republican-American newspaper which continued to operate at this site until recently. Individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which makes eligible for both State and Federal historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 70,545 sq. ft.; lot 2.36 acres. In Opportunity Zone.

Contact: Shannon Healy, Parker Benjamin Realty, (203) 710-9886, [shealy@parkerbenjamin.com](mailto:shealy@parkerbenjamin.com)

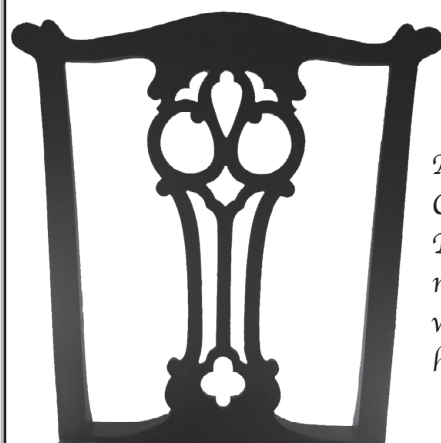


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At first, the Department of Transportation opposed the nomination, claiming that historic designation would prevent needed safety improvements. But when Lowell Weiker became governor, his new Commissioner of Transportation, Emil Frankel, withdrew the objection. The Parkway was listed on the National Register on April 17, 1991, and in September DOT announced that it would not widen the Parkway. Instead, it embarked on a long-term, multi-phase project to make safety improvements while preserving and restoring the Merritt's historic character. In 2025, the final phases of that work are nearing completion.

Preservation Connecticut has continued to be actively involved in that process. In 1994, staff provided information and guidance to the DOT working group that was writing design guidelines for the Parkway (one member of the group was former PCT board chair Nancy Campbell). When the guidelines were complete, the department established the Merritt Parkway Advisory Committee, comprising department employees along with representatives from each Parkway town, the regional Council of Governments, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Connecticut chapters of the American Society of Landscape Architects and American Institute of Architects—and PCT. The committee meets regularly to discuss ongoing work on the Parkway.

The commitment to preserving and enhancing the Merritt was a significant accomplishment. In 1995, it received nationwide recognition when the Department of Transportation and



The National Trust for Historic Preservation honored preservation of the Merritt with an award in 1995.

PCT received a National Preservation Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Another step was the creation of the Merritt Parkway Conservancy as a private partner to the DOT along the lines of the Central Park Conservancy in New York. The new organization was conceived by Emil Frankel and incubated by Preservation Connecticut until it could be incorporated and obtain nonprofit status. In 2005, PCT joined the Conservancy's lawsuit to stop out-of-scale construction of the Route 7 interchange. In 2025, PCT continues to participate in planning for that interchange at a more reasonable scale.

Advocacy for the Merritt came at a time when preservationists increasingly were seeking to reduce the harm wrought on historic places by insensitive roadbuilding. As the famed architectural historian Vincent Scully (a former Trustee) wrote in *Connecticut*

*Preservation News* in 1990, "The automobile is a destroyer... You can't endlessly expand the volume of automobile traffic anyway without destroying the whole place, in this case, Connecticut."

In the years that followed, PCT and other preservationists increasingly thought in terms of community, regional, and statewide planning and not just individual buildings. Lessons learned on the Merritt contributed to PCT's advocacy of scenic road designation, corridor management plans, and traffic-calming design. Those lessons even extended to the battle against sprawl development that gutted historic town and city centers and ate up historic and scenic countryside and they continue to inform our advocacy for community planning that incorporates historic resources. 🌿

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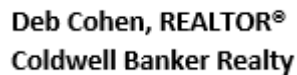
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## Fifty years / fifty places

### 1990s: the Meritt Parkway

Preservation Connecticut's longest-running project has been the Merritt Parkway. Built through eight coastline towns between 1934 and 1940 to relieve congestion on the Boston Post Road (U.S. Route 1), the 37-mile parkway was designed to be both an efficient transportation corridor and a pleasant drive. It continues to be beloved for its naturalistic landscape and inventive concrete bridges.

In 1990 the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) was considering plans to expand the Parkway to carry more traffic. Options included making the current road one-way and building a duplicate roadway alongside it or replacing it with an entirely new road built to modern highway standards. While the first option might have retained a few original bridges, both would have destroyed the landscape.

To address this threat to the historic roadway, the then-Connecticut Trust (hereafter referred to as Preservation Connecticut) started by nominating the Parkway to the National Register of Historic Places (in fact, a nomination for the road had been created in 1974, but it was withdrawn under orders from then-governor Ella Grasso). With funding from Rene Anselmo of Greenwich, a longtime champion of the Parkway, staff members Catherine Lynn and Christopher Wigren wrote the nomination and shepherded it through the approval process.

It was a good time to write the nomination. The Merritt had just reached the 50<sup>th</sup> anni-



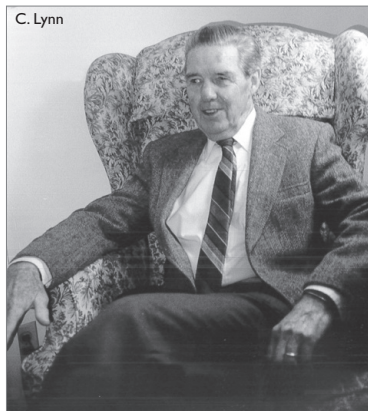
Merritt Parkway Conservancy

In its longest running project, Preservation Connecticut has worked to protect and enhance the Merritt Parkway since 1990.

versary of its completion, the usual baseline for National Register designation. Yet several members of the original team, including

engineer A. Earl Wood, landscape architect Weld Thayer Chase, and sculptor Edward Ferrari were still alive and available for interviews. At the same time, nominations for other parkways, including the nearby Bronx River Parkway in New York, had been written and provided context. They showed that the Merritt was part of a nationwide movement in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to provide infrastructure that enhanced the public realm.

*continued on page 18*



C. Lynn

Thayer Chase, who designed the Merritt's landscape, was interviewed for the National Register nomination in 1990.