



May News

May 14, 2020

Message from the President

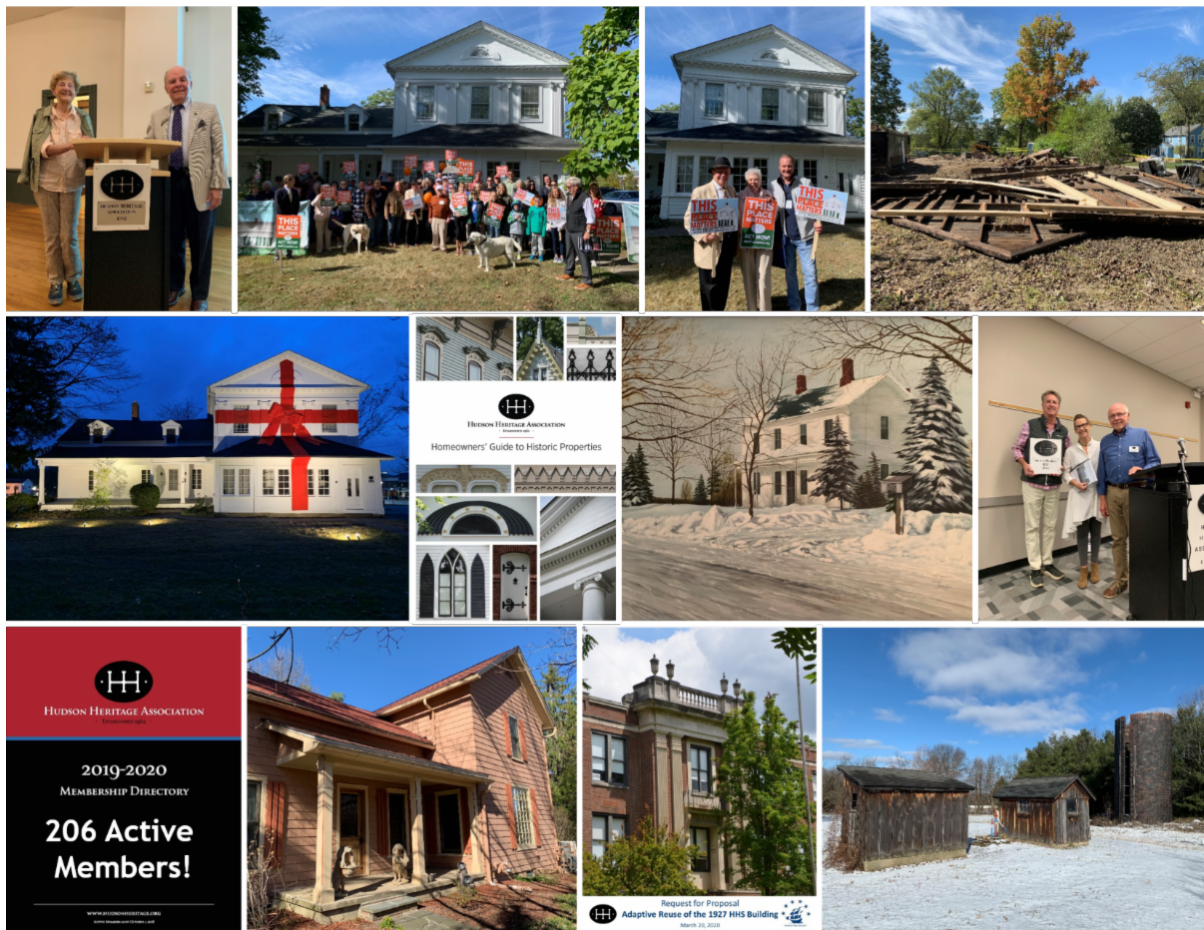
HHA Celebrates Great Success, Unexpected Surprises and Some Uncertainty as 2019/20 Programming Year Comes to an End

Today, May 14, would have marked HHA's Annual May Members Meeting and Program. This event is a time when members come together to celebrate HHA's accomplishments in the past year, recognize board members whose terms have ended, nominate and welcome new officers and directors, present HHA's Preservation Awards, and enjoy the company of others who share a common interest of architecture, history and preservation in Hudson.

This year's May Meeting/Program was planned for Case Barlow Farm (CBF) and would have been held, appropriately enough, inside the newly restored historic barn "Big Red." CBF has been working tirelessly over the last few years to discretely integrate public amenity upgrades and code requirements into Big Red, so that it can be utilized as a gathering and event space for individuals, organizations and the community.

Though this year's Annual Meeting had to unfortunately be canceled, we look forward to seeing you and Big Red this fall, at our September program.

May officially marks the end of HHA's program year. A lot has been accomplished in the past year, including many great successes, a few disappointments on preservation and the unprecedented challenges that no one could have anticipated just a few months ago. Here are the HHA highlights from May 2019 to May 2020:



- **May 2019** - HHA introduces the "Award for Distinguished Contributions to Hudson" with the first awards going to Ginger Rogers and Tom Vince.
- **Summer 2019** - With seed money from HHA, the newly established Baldwin-Buss House Foundation (BBHF) launches several successful fundraising events that generate awareness about the importance of purchasing, restoring and preserving the historic 1825 Baldwin-Buss House on the west Village Green. The BBHF board is almost entirely made up of current and past HHA board members, though the two organizations are separate.
- **Fall 2019** - HHA continues to collect, organize, electronically scan and archive decades of important HHA organization documents.
- **Fall 2019** - HHA adds 168 house reports to its website. Now, interesting architectural and family history is available for each home with an HHA Historic Marker.
- **October 2019** - Hudson unexpectedly loses a historic house to demolition in the Historic District at 37 North Oviatt Street.
- **October 2019** - The BBHF, with support of HHA members, holds a successful "THIS PLACE MATTERS" Rally on the west Village Green to promote the importance of saving and preserving the Baldwin-Buss House and property. Over 125 people attend!
- **Oct-Nov 2019** - HHA awards two HHA Historic Markers: JH Walker/Wm Norton House and Farmstead (1847) at 2271 Norton Road and Moser & Almira Messer House (1836) at 12 Baldwin Street.

- **November 2019** - HHA publishes its long-awaited "Homeowners' Guide to Historic Properties" booklet. 557 booklets would be distributed to homeowners with historic homes throughout Hudson.
- **November 2019** - HHA Membership reaches 206 members, the most in recent memory, thanks to you, our members.
- **December 2019** - As part of the annual "Tree Lighting on the Green" ceremony in early December, the Baldwin-Buss House is wrapped in an oversized red bow and ribbon and flooded with light to "give thanks" to the Hudson community and all those who contributed to the successful fundraising campaign. Weeks later, the BBHF in partnership with Peg's Foundation, would announce the purchase of the house and property, securing its preservation and future for generations to come.
- **January 2020** - The Historic 1846 Oviatt-Curtiss Homestead at 1415 Middleton Road is approved for demolition, prompting an effort by HHA to save the historic house and outbuildings. Its future is still uncertain.
- **March 2020** - HHA submits a comprehensive proposal for a "Cultural Arts Center" in the historic 1927 Hudson High School building on Oviatt Street, in response to the Hudson City School District's issuance of a Request for Proposals for the adaptive reuse of the building
- **March - May 2020** - HHA cancels three scheduled programs and three board meetings because of the coronavirus pandemic, an unprecedented time for the Hudson community and the world.

I want to thank the HHA board members, who all have diverse backgrounds, interests, knowledge and talents. Collectively, we share a common goal and passion: to preserve the unique historic streetscape, architecture, landscape and character of the Western Reserve community of Hudson. Thank you for your hard work and dedication.

I also want to thank outgoing board members Liz Leonard, Inga Walker and Don Husat, for their years of service, dedication, leadership, guidance, and friendship. It has been a pleasure collaborating with them on HHA's preservation initiatives. The stories of their accomplishments with HHA were featured in the April Newsletter (Liz) and in this Newsletter (Inga and Don).

We are also excited to welcome four new board members in the fall and to share important preservation initiatives and progress with you. We look forward to seeing you in September!

Be well and stay healthy.

Christopher Bach
President
Hudson Heritage Association

HHA Annual Meeting Rescheduled

As you know, HHA has postponed the annual meeting and members-only event that we look forward to each May. With the world shut down and public gatherings forbidden, HHA will delay until we meet again the election of new officers and the celebration of those whose terms are expiring.

We are planning a September gathering at Case Barlow Farm in the barn where we will conduct annual business, learn about the progress being made on "Big Red" and share in each other's fellowship. We are hopeful that gatherings of this size will be permitted in September. HHA members will receive invitations when we are certain we can host the event.

SAVE THE DATE
September 10
Rescheduled Annual Meeting and Celebration
Members only



HHA Annual Membership Drive

Annual dues are critical to our mission. They help us cover the general operating expenses that bring monthly programs to the community, they fund the research of historic homes, and they support our ongoing community advocacy. Annual dues are also an affirmation of the trust our members place in us to protect the unique architecture and streetscape of our special town.

As a nation and a community, we are experiencing an unprecedented pandemic and threat to public health and safety. During this time of crisis, Hudson Heritage Association continues to keep watch over our special city, taking an active role in preserving and protecting the historic integrity of our town and keeping our history alive and relevant.

HHA makes a difference!

Advocacy remains a key component of our mission. HHA recently responded to the Hudson Board of Education's request for proposal recommending the adaptive reuse of the **1927 Middle School Building** as a cultural arts center. This initiative comes with the endorsement of several community organizations and institutions and would secure the building and theater for use by community organizations and our schools for years to come.

HHA also quickly responded to the city's approval for the demolition and development of the **1846 Oviatt-Curtiss Homestead** on Middleton Road. Successfully launching a media campaign that was picked up by local and regional television and print outlets, HHA alerted Northeast Ohio that the new property owners were offering the historic home and

outbuildings at no cost to anyone willing to move them. With half a dozen interested parties at press time, HHA's efforts are ongoing.

This was an exceptionally active year for HHA. Expenses in 2019 exceeded membership revenue, requiring the organization to dip into its reserves to help fund the following initiatives:

- **\$20,000** - A donation to the **Baldwin-Buss House Foundation** as seed money to launch the successful campaign for acquisition and restoration of the historic home.
- **\$6,900** - The cost to create, publish and distribute the ***Homeowners' Guide to Historic Properties***, a book that promises to be a reference for decades to come. Copies were mailed to owners of the 557 Hudson homes built before 1940 and are also available for free at many locations in Hudson.
- **\$3,300** - These funds were used to **digitize and protect HHA's archives**, which included administrative materials dating back to HHA's inception in 1962, and 168 house reports dating from 1974, when the Historic Marker Program was initiated. This project began in 2019 with a \$1,000 grant from the Historical and Environmental Fund, a fund of the Hudson Community Foundation. Also, digital house reports for all properties with an HHA Historic Marker have been added to the HHA website.
- **\$5,200** - The cost to **promote and encourage historic preservation** through HHA's annual Preservation Awards, monthly programming, research, on-going marketing efforts and administration.
- **\$2,200** - The cost to co-sponsor the **Cleveland Restoration Society's Heritage Home Program**.

More than ever, your membership and financial support are vital to the organization's preservation efforts. Whether you are renewing your membership or joining for the first time, HHA appreciates and values your support! Your participation stands as a tribute to the preservation of our historic city and to HHA's efforts to safeguard the architectural legacy of Hudson. Please return the form below with your tax-deductible payment or join online at www.hudsonheritage.org.

Please don't delay - Respond by June 1

It's easy to renew online at www.hudsonheritage.org/membership/ or send a check to cover membership fees at one of the following levels:

- \$35 Individual
- \$55 Couple
- \$100 Historian
- \$100 Business
- \$250 Preservationist
- \$500 David Hudson

Mail to: Hudson Heritage Association, Box 2218, Hudson, OH 44236

Please contact us at info@hudsonheritage.org for more information.

We hope to hear from you soon! Thank you for your support!

HHA Board Spotlights

Thank you, Inga and Don!

Hudson Heritage Association was fortunate to have had Don Husat and Inga Walker at the head of the boardroom table for many years. Each served multiple terms, stepped up to leadership roles and even identified new opportunities for the organization that drove the HHA mission of preservation, advocacy and education.

HHA is grateful for their commitments over multiple terms and their joint efforts in leadership and fundraising. While their terms are coming to an end, we are thankful that they will be available in an advisory capacity, and both will continue to participate with HHA for advocacy and preservation.

They have each written their story, with a focus on their accomplishments during their tenures with HHA. Marvel at their accomplishments and the remarkable connection they have.

Inga Walker



Throughout my life, even when I was a young girl, I was always interested in the architecture and history of older structures. As a student at WRA, I remember admiring the historic buildings around campus and throughout Hudson.

After many years away from Ohio, my husband and I returned to Hudson in 2002, and my dream came true when we purchased the historic home at 189 Aurora Street, built in 1835 by Simeon Porter.

My interest in historical preservation and architecture guided me to Hudson Heritage Association. I was approached in 2007 to join the Board, and I accepted immediately. I spent three years on the Board (2007-2009), working primarily on the Holiday House event, an annual

fundraiser that showcased a private home decorated for the holidays.

In 2013, I rejoined the HHA Board, and in the spring of 2017, my longtime friend, colleague and fellow HHA board member Don Husat asked me to become Co-President with him for a two-year term (2017-2019). This was a turning point for both of us to be able to focus and work together on multiple preservation projects. It was an honor to work with Don, and we were very successful with our many challenging projects.

During 2018, I proposed and implemented a new HHA program, the HHA Preservation Awards. Based on a similar program in Chatham, Massachusetts, where I spend my summers, this program acknowledges and celebrates the preservation work in our community.

During my co-presidency with Don, our most notable success was establishing the Baldwin-Buss House Foundation. The Baldwin-Buss House was threatened by redevelopment, and in 2019, Don and I, along with HHA Treasurer Kathy Russell, founded Baldwin-Buss House Foundation (BBHF), an effort to save the historic house and surrounding property from falling into disrepair or potentially being torn down.

We secured a purchase agreement with the seller to have a period of time to raise the money needed for the purchase. By December 2019, we raised \$1 million and coordinated with Peg's Foundation for them to purchase the property and to put in place an operating agreement for BBHF to use the money raised for the preservation of the house.

Here's a summary of my work with HHA:

- 2013-2017 - Chair of Holiday House Committee
- 2013-2017 - Chair of Research Committee
- 2016-2017 - Renovation of WRA President's House (lead designer and preservationist for project)
- 2017 - Hudson Middle School advocacy
- 2017 - Downtown Phase 2 advocacy
- 2018 - HHA Strategic Planning
- 2018 - Proposed and implemented HHA Preservation Awards Program
- 2018 - present - Chair of Preservation Award Committee
- 2019 - present - Founder and Co-President Baldwin-Buss House Foundation
- 2019 - present - Development of WRA Carriage House project

I am grateful for all of the incredible experiences I've had with HHA. HHA is a vital organization in the community, focused on maintaining the historic roots of the town. Even though I am stepping off the Board, I will always remain dedicated to the core values of HHA and I stand ready to help with any future preservation projects in Hudson.

- Inga

Donovan Husat



In the summer of 2012 Tom Vince called me to ask whether I would be interested in taking a position on the Hudson Heritage Association Board. He knew I was a Hudson native with an interest in local history. I agreed, and spent my first year on the Board learning about the organization and its 50-year history. At that time there were not a lot of hot issues, and much of the HHA focus was on the installation of new signs that defined the limits of the Historic District.

In 2016 I was asked if I would be willing to succeed Julie Ann Hancsak as president. I agreed, with the stipulation that I would serve for one year. I was later asked to preside for a second year, and agreed to do that, provided I could have a co-president to serve with me. Inga Walker, an HHA Board member with whom I had collaborated on several WRA projects, agreed to serve as co-president. We then continued for a second year as co-presidents, with our respective terms ending in May 2019.

The first major issue that arose was the school district's 2017 Master Facilities Plan that called for the construction of a new middle school and the demolition of the current middle school complex, including the historic 1927 former Hudson High School building. With Julie Ann still on the HHA board, she, I and strong neighborhood and community activism caught the attention of the Board of Education and the school administration. It was agreed that the district would support initiatives to redevelop the 1927 Middle School building before its scheduled end-of-life in 2021. Later Inga and I proposed to the superintendent that a task force be established to study the issue. That committee

continues to meet and now, under current president Chris Bach, HHA has submitted a formal proposal for repurposing the 1927 Middle School building as a cultural arts center for the community. There is growing optimism that this will succeed.

The proposed development of Downtown Phase II arose in 2017 as well. Intended to supplement the First and Main development with office space, a hotel, service retail, condos, apartments and single-family residential structures, it met with strong opposition from many in the community. Concerns centered on density, inappropriate architecture and potential traffic issues. Inga and I met on a regular basis with city staff, and numerous times with the developer to attempt to address these issues. HHA also publicized its concerns to its members and the community through its newsletter and paid ads in the Hudson Hub-Times. The strategy was not to oppose the development, which seemed inevitable, but to work to make it a community asset and not a liability.

The third major issue to face HHA during my tenure was in 2018-19. The 1825 Baldwin-Buss House adjacent to the southwest Village Green had stood vacant and deteriorating for more than two years. The lifetime home of legendary Hudson athlete and businessman Rich Merino, it was threatened by property redevelopment. Inga and I expressed our concerns to the city on behalf of HHA. Some progress was made to stabilize the house. Discussion then arose within HHA about the possible purchase of the entire Merino property to secure it from development. Unfortunately, HHA did not have the resources to make a realistic offer, even though HHA was approached by a Cleveland developer who offered to purchase the property, donate the house to HHA and develop the remainder of the nearly 1-acre parcel. HHA rejected the offer to preclude development.

In early 2019, Inga and I and HHA Treasurer Kathy Russell began work to form a 501(c)(3) foundation to raise more than \$1.5 million to buy the property. With Inga and I serving as co-presidents and Kathy as secretary/treasurer, the Baldwin-Buss House Foundation campaign began with a donation from HHA and a subsequent loan. BBHF had raised nearly \$1 million when in December 2019 Hudson's Peg's Foundation offered to partner with BBHF to buy the property, preserve it from commercial development and permit all funds raised by BBHF to be used for restoration and operations as a community resource.

My years on the HHA Board and as president/co-president were eventful and an incredible learning experience. Any successes were the product of many, including a great, supportive, engaged and knowledgeable board - and by my good friend and long-time colleague and co-president, Inga.

It was an honor to serve.

- Don

2020 Program Dates

In anticipation of a statewide loosening of social-distancing requirements, HHA has begun planning the 2020/21 program year. Please plan to join us for these popular monthly programs! Unless otherwise noted, meetings are open to the general public and are held in the Assembly Room of Barlow Community Center at 7:30 p.m. Light refreshments are provided. Here's the tentative schedule for the start of the upcoming programming year:

September 10
Case Barlow Farm Barn
Rescheduled annual meeting/event
HHA members only

October 8

Removing Gorge Dam with Elaine Marsh

November 12

History of the railroad in Hudson with Tom Vince

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