

Sports

Brenman Archaeology Awardees Announced

Nov 29,2010



Courtesy Photo

Frances Pickering, daughter of Ellen Pickering, holds her mother's award, as fellow honoree Judy McConville expresses her thanks to members of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission.

ALEXANDRIA, VA. - The Alexandria Archaeological Commission has announced the winners of the fourth annual Bernard "Ben" Brenman Archaeology in Alexandria Award.

The awards, named in honor of the late Ben Brenman, a longtime Commission chair, were presented at the last Alexandria City Council meeting in October which is Virginia Archaeology Month.

Judy McConville was honored for being an outstanding educator who is dedicated to helping teachers and students alike learn and better understand the City where they live and work. She has successfully accomplished this through the K-12 History and Social Science curriculum, participating in revising the Virginia Standards of Learning, helping administer a Teaching American History grant, and working with Alexandria Archaeology to improve school curriculums and teaching resources.

Wesley Pippenger was recognized for his research and transcriptions of Alexandria cemetery markers and records, discovering forgotten documents, and sharing his research with Alexandria Archaeology, especially the record of burials listing the names and information of more than 1800 African Americans who died during and after the Civil War. This discovery allowed further research and archaeological investigations of the future Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial. He also discovered historic maps of Alexandria's waterfront, which have been used to create an accurate overlay of the historic shoreline for waterfront planning.

Ellen Pickering was honored posthumously for advocating the preservation and enhancement of Alexandria's historic and natural character, including the City's historic architecture and waterfront. For several decades, she shared her institutional knowledge at community meetings and public hearings, and influenced City Council actions, while positively guiding events and policies involving historical continuity. She was a true friend to archaeological causes.

The AAC established the Brenman Award in 2007 in honor of the late activist and retired U.S. Army colonel. Brenman had devoted himself to finding, preserving and sharing Alexandria's rich and diverse heritage and was a founding member of the AAC, serving as its chair for 21 years. The AAC, a City of Alexandria commission, was the

first of its kind established in the U.S.

The Brenman Award recognizes businesses, organizations, families, professional preservationists, volunteers, students and other individuals who have demonstrated work or efforts in archaeological investigation, research, site protection, education, public interpretation, open-space design, collections, or conservation.

The 14-member AAC is appointed by the City Council and develops goals and priorities for Alexandria's archaeological heritage. The commission works closely with residents, government agencies, developers, and teachers to promote archaeology in the City.

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Archaeological Commission Names 2010 Ben Brenman Award Recipients

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By Carla Branch
alexandrianews.org

The three recipients of the 2010 Ben Brenman Award are Judy McConville, Wesley Pippenger and, posthumously, Ellen Pickering.

“Each of these individuals embodies Ben Brenman’s values, and they are all very deserving recipients of this honor,” said Councilman Paul Smedberg as City Council presented the awards on Tuesday night.

Alexandria City Council and the Alexandria Archaeological Commission honored the winners of this year’s Bernard “Ben” Brenman Archeology in Alexandria Award. The awards, named in honor of the late Ben Brenman, a longtime Commission chair, were presented on Tuesday, October 26, during Virginia Archeology Month.



Brenman Award Recipients. (Courtesy Photo.)

McConville received the award for her dedication to helping teachers and students learn and better understand Alexandria through the K-12 History and Social Science curriculum. She participated in revising the State Standards of Learning, helped administer a Teaching American History grant, and worked with Alexandria Archeology to improve school curricula and teaching resources.

Pippenger was awarded for his research and transcriptions of Alexandria cemetery markers and records; his discoveries of historic maps of Alexandria’s waterfront used to create an accurate overlay of the historic shoreline for waterfront planning; and discovering forgotten documents and sharing his research with Alexandria Archeology, especially the record of burials listing the names and information of more than 1800 African-Americans who died during and after the Civil War. His work allowed further research and archaeological investigations of the Contrabands and Freedmen’s Cemetery Memorial.

Pickering was awarded for decades of advocacy to preserve and enhance the historic and natural character of Alexandria, including the City’s historic architecture and waterfront.

The AAC established the Brenman Award in 2007 in honor of the late activist and retired U.S. Army colonel. Ben Brenman devoted himself to finding, preserving and sharing Alexandria's rich and diverse heritage, and served as AAC chair for 21 years. The Brenman Award recognizes businesses, organizations, families, professional preservationists, volunteers, students, and other individuals who have demonstrated work or efforts in archaeological investigation, research, site protection, education, public interpretation, open-space design, collections or conservation.

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The Washington Times



[Human bondage hits U.S. heartland](#)

CITIZEN JOURNALISM: 'Ms. Lisabeth' shares history

By

5:45 a.m., Thursday, December 17, 2009

Born, raised and still living in the same house -- the oldest in what longtime Alexandrians know as the "Seminary" community -- Elizabeth Henry Douglas is a rare gem with lots to tell, and she remembers it all very well.



"Ms. Lisabeth," as we called her as youngsters and still do today, can always come up with something to brighten your day -- a story to share, an old photograph or a newspaper clipping. There is nothing like a picture to help tell a story, and she comes up with them out of the blue.

"I always loved to take pictures," Mrs. Douglas says.

She is a true "Seminarian" and historian in her own right.

The Alexandria Archaeological Commission, under the auspices of the Office of Historic Alexandria, awarded Mrs. Douglas the Bernard Brenman Archaeology in Alexandria Award. The honor was presented by Mayor William D. Euille during a City Council meeting on Oct. 27. Other recipients included founding commission member Vivienne Mitchell; historic property owner Joe Reeder; Sara Borgatti, for a children's Revolutionary War project; and the Louis Berger Group, for its historic study and archaeological investigation of the Bruin Slave Jail site on Duke Street.

The award is named for retired Army Col. Brenman, a city activist who was a founding member of the commission and served as its chairman for 21 years.

Mrs. Douglas received the award as "a knowledgeable source and generous donor of West End history," particularly through her contributions to oral history. Further, her recognition reads: "She witnessed the transformation of the once rural community near the [Virginia Theological] Seminary and Oakland Baptist Church. She has shared her stories, recollections, and knowledge of members of the African American community who can trace their family history to the Civil War period. Her contributions are the basis of the 'African American Walking Tour' at Fort Washington and help researchers identify other potential archaeological sites at the Fort."

Many of her family, church and community members attended the awards ceremony.

The song "Precious Memories" ("how they linger") is a great testimony for an outstanding historian. When you start a conversation with Ms. Lisabeth regarding her neighborhood, she begins by telling you that former accounts about the community's development "got it all wrong."

"Mudtown was not where they said it was. That was called Macedonia," she says of former names given the

neighborhood throughout the late 19th century and 20th century by others, including city developers.

Yes, her memory and historical knowledge are still sharp for a spry woman in her 90s. She loves to share what she knows. All she needs is a listening ear.

The old Alexandrians knew about the people who lived in Seminary, where I also live. We were called "the people from the sticks," but we were well-respected. The new Alexandrians don't know about our community because it does not exist as it did before the early 1960s. Several black families were uprooted from their homes when the city decided to build T.C. Williams High School and turn Fort Ward into a park and museum with some recreational spaces.

Twenty-eight homes were built on the land where some of the old homes had existed, and 28 families, a mix of returning and new, moved into the newly constructed neighborhood off Quaker Lane.

Thank goodness for Ms. Lisabeth. Through the years, she kept in touch with most of the families who once lived in the area, including the families who lived "up the fort."

If she doesn't know the answer to your question about our old neighbors, she will say, in her distinctive voice and enunciation, "Well, I don't know, but I'll try to get some information for you."

Recalling the origins of the Seminary area, Mrs. Douglas says, "It was a small little community, but we had our own elementary school and fantastic teachers. One of the teachers, Ms. Geraldine Stevens, was also the principal. We considered ourselves blessed. They cared about our education and well-being. We had a corner store named Donaldson's and a neighborhood church.

"It was called Seminary because of the theological seminary," she says. "If you lived in the City of Alexandria year ago, you would catch the Seminary bus to come to our community. A real true neighborhood; everyone knew each other. It was a great place to raise a family.

"We had neighbors who cared about us, and why not? We were all interconnected by blood kin and marriage."

Ms. Lisabeth was not a teacher by profession, but she spent hours at the Oakland Baptist Church teaching Sunday school and preparing the children for the Easter and Christmas plays, making them recite their "pieces" from memory. She had a captive audience because she knew every mother and father in the neighborhood, and she was the second mother to all the children. Disobedience was unacceptable in our neighborhood.

Some people get their rewards early in life, some people don't get any rewards, and some people are rewarded throughout their lives for one thing or another. Ms. Lisabeth has always been one happy lady, and getting the Brenman Award just put the icing on the cake.

She enjoys her spiritual life, her walks and nature. She can be seen slowly walking the mile between her home and the grocery store or to church on any day. She's a sage of a new era.

• Joyce Sanchez is a writer and retired educator living in Alexandria.

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Alexandria Times

October 16, 2008



From left to right, Councilman Paul Smedberg, Brenman Award recipients Chan Mohney of Tour de Digs, Alexandria historian T. Michael Miller, Lillie Finklea and Louise Massoud of Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery, Dr. Morgan Delaney of the Historic Alexandria Foundation, and Mayor Bill Euille.

Photo/Amy Bertsch

Brenman Archaeology Award Winners Announced

The Alexandria Archaeological Commission has announced the winners of the second annual Bernard "Ben" Brenman Archaeology in Alexandria Award. The awards, named in honor of the late Ben Brenman, a longtime Commission chair, were presented on Tuesday, October 14, at the Alexandria City Council meeting.

The 2008 honorees are:

Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery, which was founded in 1987 by Lillie Finklea and Louise Massoud to save and recognize Freedmen's Cemetery, the once-forgotten 19th-century African-American burial ground. FFC's efforts were highly successful, resulting in a state historical marker, the purchase of the

parcel by the City of Alexandria, and ultimately the Contraband and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial Project. The archaeological investigations at the cemetery identified almost 500 graves of freedmen and contrabands, sparking a high level of community interest in the site's history and in Alexandria archaeology.

T. Michael Miller, the City's research historian whose part-time Alexandria history hobby evolved into a 30-year career in local history. Miller has produced more publications on Alexandria history than anyone else, and his research has greatly enhanced the archaeological investigations of the Lee-Fendall House, the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary, Shuter's Hill, Lee Street

bakery and Civil War sites, Wilkes Street Tunnel, Hooff's Run Bridge and Freedmen's Cemetery.

Chan Mohney, who combined his fascination with the past, volunteer archaeology work and cycling abilities to develop the concept of an archaeological interpretive bike ride. Offering the "Tour de Digs," Mohney a longtime Alexandria Archaeological Commission member, developed the idea of biking to archaeological sites and then discussing the history of those places, and, with the help of others, this idea expanded into the Alexandria Heritage Trail guidebook and into annual trail rides during Virginia Archaeology Month.

Historic Alexandria Foundation, incorporated more than 50 years ago to "preserve, protect and restore structures and sites of historic and archaeological interest in and associated with the City of Alexandria," and is now a major force in preserving Alexandria's history through its buildings, neighborhoods and unique character. For the past three years, HAF has provided funding to the Alexandria Archaeology Digital Atlas, a system of historic map overlays that are geo-rectified to Alexandria's contemporary grid and landscape, which is now the primary tool for preservation planning and archaeology code review, ensuring great protection to archaeological resources.

Alexandria Times

December 20, 2007



Courtesy Photos

Kerri Holland and Joe Balicki of John Milner Associates, left to right, Vice Mayor Del Pepper, Bob Youngentob and Terry Eakin of Eakin/Youngetob Associates, and Kathleen Pepper, Chair of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission at the presentation of the first-ever Ben Brenman Awards.

Brenman Awards honor companies

Three local companies were honored as winners of the Ben Brenman Award for their commitment to archaeological work in Alexandria. The award was named for Ben Brenman who served as chairman of the Archaeological Commission for 21 years and was instrumental in writing and advocating for the implementation of the City's archaeological protection legislation.

Vice Mayor Redella S. "Del" Pepper and members of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission announced the winners of the first Bernard "Ben" Brenman awards at Tuesday night's City Council meeting.

Honorees E. Sanders Partee, a citizen of Alexandria, for his outstanding "backyard stewardship" and cooperation in the excavation of the 200-

year-old Henry Piercy pottery in Old Town; Eakin/Youngentob Associates, a local developer, for the company's commitment to the highest quality archaeological preservation at Ford's Landing, Stonegate and Old Town Village, where a historic wharf, ship hulls, 5000-year-old American Indian tools, and a Civil War site were documented; and John Milner Associates, Inc., a cultural resource management firm, for its professional archaeologists who pioneered improved methods of identifying Civil War campsites in small spaces including two camp sites and a Crimean oven, in Alexandria backyards.

Joe Balicki, principal archaeologist for John Milner Associates, added, "Alexandria's archaeology program is world-renowned and it is an honor to be recognized by the Archaeology Commission and to receive the Brenman Award for our contributions to the study of the city's heritage. The amount of archaeology that survives just below our feet is truly amazing." Commission Chair S. Kathleen Pepper said,

"These three inaugural recipients of the Ben Brenman award demonstrate that private individuals, groups, and businesses value history and are committed to quality archaeology to enhance the city's understanding and preservation of its past for the benefit of citizens and visitors alike." The 14-member AAC is appointed by the City Council and develops goals and priorities for Alexandria's archaeological heritage. The commission works closely with citizens, government agencies, developers and teachers to promote archaeology in the city.

- *Carla Branch*

Alexandria Gazette Packet

December 13, 2007

An Award, Dig It?

Awards can sometimes be a little like fruitcake. You're happy to get one, but you're never really sure what to do with it. After the glow of appreciation wears off, it can become another piece of clutter complicating your life. But not the new **Ben Brenman Award**, which debuted this week at City Hall.

Named for one of the founders of the city's Archeology Commission — a man who acted as chairman for an astounding 21 years — the Brenman Award was created to recognize those who demonstrate “high

quality work, innovation, commitment or extraordinary efforts in conducting and documenting research and advancing public appreciation and advocacy for archaeology.” Tuesday night, the awards were presented to E. Sanders Partee, Eakin-Youngentob Associates and John Milner Associates. Each of the three awards was a one-of-a-kind creation City Archeologist **Pam Cressy** called a “stratigraphic trophy.”

“We thought you may have enough plaques to hang on your wall,” Cressy told the recipients. “But you might not have enough dirt in your office.”

The awards contain layers of clay, sand, gravel, dirt and — yes — modern artifacts such as broken plates sandwiched between two pieces of glass. The result resembles a cross between jeweler's ant farm and a miniature geology exhibition. Members of the Archeology Commission were quick to point out that the materials used to fill the awards were modern artifacts, not the important pieces that are protected by the city's archeology ordinance Brenman helped to institute. “We wanted to make sure they had artifacts in them,” said **Adron Krekeler**, a commission member who designed the award. “That's what archeology is all about.”