

John L. Nau III
National Building Museum Honor Award Gala Remarks
Tuesday, April 1, 2014- 7pm
401 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Good Evening –

It is an honor for me to participate tonight to pay tribute to a person whose commitment and dedication to historic preservation has been unwavering for many years. I had the good fortune to meet and get to know Laura Bush when she was First Lady of Texas.

And, the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation program which you heard about in the video was an initiative we worked on together beginning in 1999. It was a privilege for me to serve as chairman of the Texas Historical Commission under Governor George W. Bush and Mrs. Bush played a significant role in ensuring that our historic treasures of Texas such as our courthouses were preserved and restored for future generations to enjoy and experience.

By preserving iconic landmarks like courthouses and main streets you see communities come alive with a renewed spirit and vitality – and Laura Bush experienced this first hand as she traveled throughout Texas for courthouse dedications and Main Street openings.

And, as a country we are fortunate that Laura Bush saw an opportunity to share her commitment to historic preservation by making it one of her priorities as First Lady of the United States.

Last year marked the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Preserve America initiative, a unique public-private effort championed by Mrs. Bush.

I was honored to serve as chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation during the Bush administration and had the opportunity to work alongside Laura Bush once again.

The Preserve America initiative was promoted and administered by the ACHP on behalf of the White House and in partnership with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and various other departments. The program's effects have been far-reaching. As First Lady Mrs. Bush traveled the country recognizing the historic assets of Preserve America communities.

The Preserve America program continues in the current Administration and as of this spring – 890 communities have been recognized as Preserve America communities – they are in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two territories. Forty Preserve America Steward programs have been designated for demonstrating noteworthy volunteer stewardship work. And, 20 Presidential Awards have been given recognizing exemplary accomplishments in sustainable use and preservation of heritage assets by both private and public parties.

More than \$21 million dollars in Federal matching grants for 280 projects were given to support heritage tourism, including research, interpretation, education, and promotion of history and historic sites.

Preserve America has inspired the creation of a youth summit program, a national history teacher award, and many other public and private activities.

Preserve America has served as both a catalyst for and a public acknowledgment of the value of local and regional cultural heritage, education, and community development using our valued historic assets.

It has also been a force in building a more inclusive preservation program, reaching diverse communities, and cultural groups throughout the country and helping to ensure that their stories and heritage are being preserved and told as part of the American story.

Future generations will have the opportunity to experience the treasures of our past because of this great program. Laura, your commitment and dedication to historic preservation are to be commended – your vision and leadership have made history come alive for future generations – and for that the preservation community is very grateful. Congratulations on this recognition – I can think of no one more worthy to receive this award – thank you.

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