

Doña Ana County Historical Society

49th Annual Awards Program

Saturday, January 30, 2016
Double Eagle Restaurant in Mesilla



In the Fall of 1940, the 45th Infantry Division was called to active duty as the United States quietly prepared for hostilities. The 120th Combat Engineers Regiment from Las Cruces was part of the division and went to Fort Sill, Okl. to train. The call-up affected much of Las Cruces. This photo shows Chaplain Henry Buchanan, pastor of St. Genevieve's Church, saying mass for the troops from the tailgate of a truck at Fort Sill. Photo courtesy of Manny Chavez.



The Doña Ana County Historical Society (DACHS) was founded in 1963 to encourage and foster a better understanding of the County's far reaching history for future generations. Emphasizing research, education, and preservation, the society encourages a greater appreciation of New Mexico history, especially that of Doña Ana County.

Founding Members

John Atshool, Betty Bowen, Helen Caffey, Laiten Camien, Martin Campbell, Ira Clark, Adlai Feather, Louis Freudenthal, Dorothy Mechem, Hugh Milton, Thomas Mitman, Helen Shomer, David Streeter, J. Paul Taylor, and Mark Thompson

Doña Ana County Historical Society 2016 Board of Directors

President: Dr. Jon Hunner

Past President: Dr. Susan Krueger

Vice President: Kimberly Miller, nominee

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Historian: Sally Kading

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Doyle Piland, C. W. "Buddy" Ritter, and Sara Wagner

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Website and Publicity: Jim Eckles

Newsletter Editor: Doyle Piland

Education/Scholarships: Dr. Jon Hunner

Book Sales: Carl Eichstaedt

Liaison to City Museums: Mike Walczak

Liaison to Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum: Leah Tookey

If you would like to help out on a committee or with some other aspect of the Society, by all means, volunteer. Just contact one of the officers above and offer your assistance. Thank you.

Past Presidents

Louis E. Freudenthal	Oct 1963 – Nov 1964	1st
George Adlai Feather	Nov 1964 – Nov 1965	2nd
J. Paul Taylor	Nov 1965 – Nov 1966	3rd
	Feb 1977 – Mar 1979	8th
Charlotte K. Priestley	Nov 1966 – Jan 1969	4th
Calvin L. Traylor	Jan 1969 – Feb 1971	5th
	1991 - 1993	14th
Louise Garrett	Feb 1971 – Fall 1974	6th
James McNeil	Fall 1974 – Feb 1977	7th
Opal Lee Priestley	Mar 1979 – April 1981	9th
Austin Hoover	Apr 1981 – Oct 1983	10th
	Jan – Dec 2004	23rd
Christine Myers	Oct 1983 – Jan 1987	11th
James H. Powell	1987 – 1989	12th
Paxton Price	1989 – 1991	13th
Linda G. Harris	1993 – 1995	15th
Charles (Chuck) Miles	1995 – 1997	16th
Clarence Fielder	1997	17th
Eva Jane (Janie) Matson	1998	18th
Roger Walker	1999	19th
Beverly Pirtle	2000 – 2001	20th
Robert L. (Bob) Hart	2002	21st
Donna Eichstaedt	2003 – 2005	22nd
Charles (Chuck) Murrell	2005 – 2006	24th
Roger Rotenmaier	2007 – Jun 2008	25th
George Helfrich	Jul 2008 – 2009	26th
George Hackler	2010 - 2012	27th
Marcie Palmer	2012 - 2014	28th
Susan Krueger	2014 - 2016	29th

Doña Ana County Historical Society 49th Annual Awards Program

WelcomeDr. Susan Krueger, President, 2014-2016

Opening Remarks..... C.W. “Buddy” Ritter
Growing up in the Mesilla Valley

Installation of 2016 Officers and Board MembersDr. Susan Krueger

Program

Master of Ceremonies.....Dr. Jon Hunner, President, 2016-2018

Awards

Pasajero Del Camino Real Award C.W. “Buddy” Ritter
with Craig Holden, *Mesilla Comes Alive: A History of Mesilla and its Valley*

Hall of Fame Award.....Doyle Piland

Heritage Award..... Frank Parrish

Old Timers Award.....Prehistoric Trackways

Noteworthy Renovation of a Historic Building.....Phillips Chapel

Building of Historical Significance

And Worthy of Preservation.....Nestor Armijo House

Awards & Recognition for 2016

Pasajero Del Camino Real Award

This award is given to author(s) of a significant historical publication about events, persons, places or issues in Doña Ana County or the nearby area. The Society should strongly consider works by its members and those persons living and writing in Doña Ana County.

2016 Pasajero Del Camino Real Award Recipient

C.W. “Buddy” Ritter with Craig Holden for
Mesilla Comes Alive; A History of Mesilla and its Valley

Realizing early on how time consuming writing a book can be, Buddy turned to Craig Holden, a novelist and professor at New Mexico State University, for assistance. At their first meeting, it was clear the two shared a vision of a book about Mesilla and the Mesilla Valley.

Describing the book to the reader, Buddy explains that he wanted to challenge assumptions, some of which have stood the test of time - until now; reveal new information, for example, the true origin of the City’s name “Las Cruces”; and uncover new resources, including a document written in Spanish by Albert Fountain. Getting the information to the public was important to Buddy.

The book begins with the first European contacts in the Mesilla Valley, about 1535, and closes with statehood in January 1912. It is well annotated with footnotes and



Hall of Fame Award

The Hall of Fame Award is designed to recognize an individual who is known for their exceptional contribution to the preservation of the history and culture of the Mesilla Valley. The contribution should be of a substantial nature and be evidenced by enduring and observable worth to the Doña Ana Historical Society and the community at large.

2016 Hall of Fame Inductee Doyle Piland

Currently Doyle serves on the DACHS Board of Directors as a Board Member-at-large. Also, he edits the Society's monthly Newsletter and he is the typographer for the Southern New Mexico Historical Review (SNMHR) published annually.

Further evidence of his enduring value to the Society came in 2014 when



Doyle expanded the availability of Society material by converting all past issues of the SNMHR into searchable pdf files, making them available on the DACHS's website.

Beyond Doyle's work with the Society, his on-going contribution to the preservation of history and culture in the Mesilla Valley can be seen in his volunteer work at White Sands Missile Range. For the past 15 years, he has served both as a volunteer Archivist for the missile range's Museum and as a volunteer member of the White Sands Missile Range Historical Founda-

tion, maintaining their website and other activities.

Doyle's path to White Sands began shortly after he graduated from high school in Missouri and joined the Army. Twenty-two years later, he retired having earned a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from NMSU along the way.

In 1980, Doyle was hired by White Sands as a civilian employee where he spent 17 years as an electronics engineer in research and development.

After forty years of active federal service, Doyle retired to Las Cruces and began his volunteer career at White Sands.

Heritage Award

The Heritage Award is given to a person or persons whose actions or deeds have contributed to the historical or cultural heritage of Dona Ana County and who is (are) not professional or avocational historians.

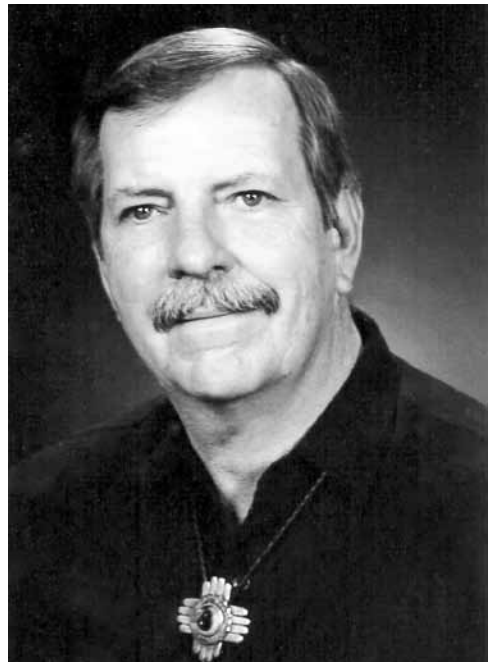
2016 Heritage Award Recipient Frank Parrish

Frank Parrish was born in El Paso, Texas, and at an early age, he was fascinated by the natural world and local history. He hunted arrowheads in the Franklin Mountains and hung out with his neighbor whose father was C. L. Sonnichsen, the noted historian of the Southwest. He graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso with degrees in zoology and geology.

After graduation he worked for Mobile Oil Company in Dallas, gaining work experience in the different fields of the oil industry. When he left Mobile Oil, he returned to El Paso, obtained a teaching certificate and taught in the sciences for years. His next job was with Texas Parks and Wildlife and it was here he picked up a camera for the first time, beginning a lifelong passion for nature photography.

Frank's study of American history and the Wild West inevitably included Billy the Kid. Frank was a regular at the famous Billy the Kid Museum owned originally by George Griggs and then by his brother Edgar who moved the Museum from Mesilla to the Griggs family restaurant in El Paso.

Over time Frank, who had befriended Edgar, became a scholar of the life and times of Billy the Kid. His interest grew into a collection of memorabilia, writings and presentations which have contributed significantly to the historical and cultural knowledge of Dona Ana County and which have earned Frank the DACHS's Heritage Award.



Old Timers Award

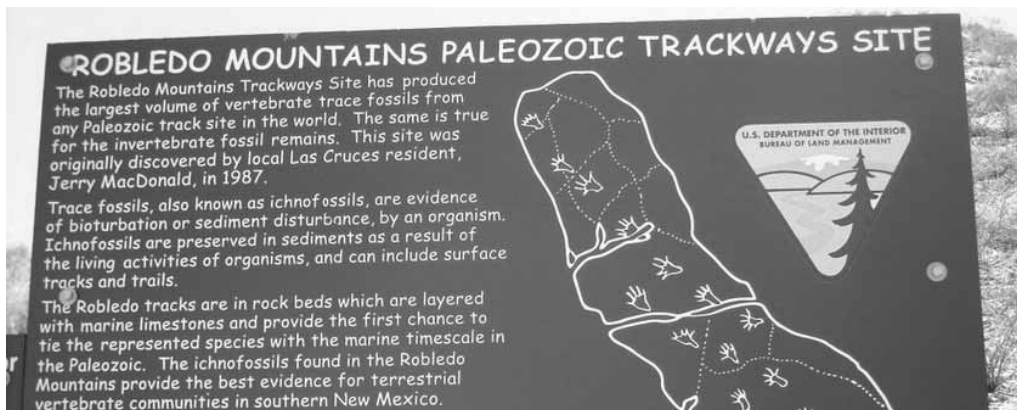
This award identifies a cherished object, a natural phenomenon or a cultural tradition prominent in the heritage of the Mesilla Valley deserving of public attention and recognition as an important part of the physical character of this region.

2016 Old Timers Award Prehistoric Trackways National Monument

This amazing site was discovered in the Robledo Mountains by Jerry MacDonald in June 1987. Some 230 million years ago, what is now Las Cruces was located near the equator with a tropical environment and was sometimes covered by an inland sea. The tracks of amphibians, reptiles and insects of all sizes, along with marine fossils and plant foliage, were captured in the red mudstone.

To conserve and promote this extraordinary natural resource, identified as one of the most significant finds in the world from the Permian period, the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument was established in 2009. It covers 5,280 acres on the west side of the Rio Grande.

Partnerships were an important part of developing the Trackways as an educational, scientific and recreational resource. Locally, BLM partnered with the Las Cruces and Gadsden Public School Districts, holding outdoor classroom programs. BLM also joined with NMSU's Geology Department to conduct field research. The guided day hikes offered to the public open up opportunities to better understand this unique prehistoric site and to enjoy its visual and scenic qualities - to glimpse into time predating the dinosaurs by 70 million years.



Noteworthy Renovation Award

This award recognizes a renovation (interior and exterior) of a historic home or building in Dona Ana County. It was awarded most recently in 2012 to the De La O Saloon in Dona Ana.

2016 Noteworthy Renovation Award Phillips Chapel

Phillips Chapel CME (Christian Methodist Episcopal) Church, 638 N. Tornillo St., was built in 1911. It served as a church and a community center for the African American population in Las Cruces. In 1924, when the Las Cruces Public School District became segregated, Phillips Chapel also served as a school for 35 or so black students sent there from Central Elementary.

Distinguished by its age and historical significance, the Chapel was recognized by the DACHS in 2001 as a building worthy of preservation. In 2003, the Chapel was listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties and the National Register of Historic Places.

Over time the structure's adobe walls had begun to deteriorate. Water damage had been



repaired with concrete, causing the adobes to retain moisture and the walls to crumble from inside out. The south wall in particular was unstable and it was clear the adobe bricks would have to be removed and replaced. By 2005, the entire building appeared ready to collapse.

In 2009, a preservation group began fund-raising to preserve the Chapel and recruiting faculty from NMSU and Dona Ana Community College (DACC) for assistance. In January 2010, DACC, along with a several adobe experts, turned the site into a hands-on classroom for students eager to learn adobe restoration techniques for credit. Immediately, community volunteers joined in, led by Clarence Fielder, a NMSU History Professor and Steward of Phillips Chapel which his grandparents founded.

When DACC stopped offering the class in the fall of 2011, Beth O'Leary, an anthropology professor at NMSU and a member of the Phillips Chapel Restoration Committee, stepped up to help recruit and train volunteers and oversee the restoration tasks. It was not easy: there were ongoing structural problems, volunteers came and went, it was cold outside and inside during January and February. Then it finally came to pass, as the year 2012 ended, the restoration project was completed.

Today, the Chapel includes a small museum celebrating its history and services are held weekly. To honor this accomplishment, the DACHS recognizes Phillips Chapel with the Society's Noteworthy Renovation Award.



Buildings and Properties Worthy of Preservation

This award is given to encourage an owner to preserve the uniqueness of a building in Doña Ana County that is distinguished by its age and historical character, its historical significance, or that represents historical architectural character. Residential, commercial, and industrial buildings are eligible.

Buildings and Properties with Historical Significance

This designation can be applied to a property, including a district, a building, structure, or object, which is at least fifty years old. Criteria used to evaluate historic significance of a property include association with a significant historic event or person and/or incorporation within the property of historic characteristics of a period of time or a method of construction or an architectural style.

2016 Building Worthy of Preservation 2016 Building with Historical Significance The Nestor Armijo House

The Nestor Armijo House at 150 E. Lohman was built around 1860 as a single story four-room adobe dwelling. Nestor Armijo acquired it in 1877, and added on the distinctly Victorian second story that faces Lohman Ave. When he died in 1911, his granddaughters Josephine Gallagher and Gertrude Ascarate and their families moved into the house. They did a major renovation 1914, adding Arts and Crafts design elements to the interior while maintaining the exterior Victorian Style.

The house was recognized in 1967 by the DACHS as a building Worthy of Preservation and in 1976 it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It remained a residence until Pioneer Bank occupied it from 1982 to 1991 when it was again renovated with updates and alterations to suit the bank's needs.

In January 2012, when the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce took possession of the Armijo House, it had been vacant for several years. The west wall of the two-story section was sinking and deep cracks had appeared in it. Some of the wood shutters and trim had fallen off and the balcony was deteriorating. The Chamber knew there were structural issues and identified one of their first tasks as restoring the west wall. With the restoration underway, the Chamber anticipated completing the work by the fall of 2012. However, as the Chamber quickly came to realize, there were many more unforeseen circumstances to take

into account than they thought there would be. Resolute, the Chamber moved forward.

The milestones reached in 2015 include stabilization of the west wall, now standing on its own; the second floor verandas have new hard wood floors and railings; the windows have been reinstalled or refinished; and the roof has been redone with cedar shingles. In 2016, the work will move inside to complete the restoration of the interior. To honor the Chamber's undaunted commitment, the Historical Society reaffirms its recognition of the Nestor Armijo House as significant and worthy of preservation.



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Dona Ana County Historical Society



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