

AWARDS INTRODUCTION

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) offers a variety of awards to recognize worthy accomplishments and exemplary leadership in the preservation of Texas' heritage. Most of the major awards are presented at the agency's annual Real Places Conference, although the THC's highest award, The Governor's Award for Historic Preservation, is presented in a special ceremony arranged with the staff of the Governor's office.

A wide variety of projects and volunteer efforts may be recognized. Any member of the public may submit a nomination in accordance with the guidelines. Please refer to the detailed guidelines to determine which award may best fit your needs and for further instructions regarding nomination procedures.

NOTE: No current THC staff member, commissioner, advisory board member, or any member of their immediate families, may be the recipient of any THC award. Individuals may not be nominated for awards posthumously. The THC may change a nomination's award category if it is determined to have been submitted in an inappropriate category. A nomination may only be submitted for and considered in one category at any time.

Governor's Award for Historic Preservation

PURPOSE: The Governor's Award for Historic Preservation recognizes an individual's and/or organization's highest achievement in the preservation of Texas' prehistoric and historic heritage. Awards will be presented each year at a special ceremony arranged with the governor's office.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed two double-spaced pages) of the nominee's achievement(s)
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. A resumé or vita if the nominee is an individual
 - e. A list of all persons involved in the achievement(s) if the nominee is an organization, institution, or agency
2. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered. Any photographs submitted should be black and white, labeled, and show a credit line for publication.
3. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations.
4. Award decisions will be made by the Executive Committee of the Texas Historical Commission, with ratification and final approval by the full Commission.

DEADLINE: NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 5 P.M. ON AUGUST 15, 2026.

Ruth Lester Lifetime Achievement Award

PURPOSE: Named for pioneering Texas preservationist Ruth Lester of Jefferson, this award recognizes those individuals who have made a significant, long-term contribution to historic preservation in Texas. One award shall be presented at the Real Places Conference, although the Commission may choose not to present an award in any given year.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed two double-spaced pages) of the nominee's achievement(s)
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. A resumé or vita
2. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered.
3. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations.
4. Texas Historical Commission administration will make award decisions based on recommendations by the agency's Awards Committee, with ratification and final approval by the full Commission.

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John Ben Shepperd County Historical Commission Leadership Award

PURPOSE: Named for former Texas Attorney General and Texas Historical Commission (THC) member John Ben Shepperd, who is considered the driving force behind the creation of the Texas historical marker program, this leadership award for County Historical Commission chairs recognizes outstanding individual leadership necessary to carry out an aggressive and well-balanced preservation program. One award will be presented at the Real Places Conference, although the THC may choose not to present an award in any given year.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Only current and former chairpersons of County Historical Commissions are eligible for the award.
2. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed two double-spaced pages) of the achievements
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. A resumé or vita emphasizing leadership in historic preservation
3. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered.
4. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations.
5. Award decisions will be made by the Awards Committee of the THC, based on recommendations of a committee of County Historical Commission Outreach Program staff, with ratification and final approval by the THC's full Commission.

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George Christian Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award

PURPOSE: George Christian, well-known Texas political consultant and former press secretary to President Lyndon B. Johnson and Texas governors Price Daniel and John Connally, served as a THC commissioner for 18 years. This award, named in his honor, recognizes an individual for outstanding volunteer service to historic preservation efforts in Texas. One award will be presented at the Real Places Conference, although the Commission may choose not to present an award in any given year.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed two double-spaced pages) of the achievement(s)
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. A resumé or vita
2. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered.
3. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations.
4. Texas Historical Commission administration will make award decisions based on recommendations by the agency's Awards Committee, with ratification and final approval by the full Commission.

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John L. Nau, III Award of Excellence in Museums

PURPOSE: Named in honor of Texas Historical Commission Chair John L. Nau, III, this award recognizes an individual or institution in the museum field for significant achievement in the areas of historical interpretation, museum education, conservation of collections, and/or community involvement. One award winner will be selected, although the commission may choose not to present an award in any given year. The award includes a monetary stipend for the honoree's museum.

The museum must be an organized and permanent institution in the state of Texas, with a primary mission to serve as a history museum and open to the public on a regular schedule. For purposes of this award, a history museum is defined as a museum with a primary mission focusing on the preservation and interpretation of cultural history.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed two double-spaced pages) of the achievements
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis identifying the individual or institution being nominated and summarizing the specific achievement(s) for which the individual or institution is being nominated
2. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination description, including items like brochures, photographs, programs, webpage copy, social media posts and visitor feedback. Please submit copies as these materials will stay with the application. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered.
3. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations. THC encourages museums to have or be working toward the adoption of the five core documents that are fundamental for museum operations: Mission Statement, Institutional Code of Ethics, Strategic Institutional Plan, Collections Policy and Disaster Preparedness / Emergency Response Plan. For questions or guidance about policies and recommendations related to museums, contact THC Museum Services Program.
4. Award decisions will be made by the Executive Committee of the Texas Historical Commission based on recommendations from History Programs Division staff.

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Curtis D. Tunnell Lifetime Achievement Award in Archeology

PURPOSE: Named in honor of former State Archeologist and Texas Historical Commission Executive Director Curtis Tunnell, this award recognizes an individual for outstanding lifetime accomplishments in archeological research and/or preservation. One award will be presented at the Real Places Conference, although the Commission may choose not to present an award in any given year.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Professional and avocational archeologists are eligible to receive this award.
2. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed two double-spaced pages) of key achievement(s)
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. A resumé or vita
3. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered.
4. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations.
5. Award decisions will be made by the Awards Committee of the Texas Historical Commission, based on recommendations of a committee of Archeology Division staff, with ratification and final approval by the full Commission.

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Anice B. Read Award of Excellence in Community Heritage Development

PURPOSE: Named in honor of Anice Read, former Texas Historical Commission member and founder of the Texas Main Street Program, this award recognizes an individual or organization for exemplary work in community revitalization, preservation planning and protection, or heritage tourism which significantly advances the impacts of historic preservation in Texas. One award will be presented at the Real Places Conference, although the Commission may choose not to present an award in any given year.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed two pages) of the nominee's achievement(s), including the area of accomplishment (community revitalization, heritage tourism, preservation planning and protection)
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. A resumé or vita if the nominee is an individual
 - e. A list of all persons involved in the achievement if the nominee is an organization or public entity
2. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be accepted.
3. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with state historic preservation programs and policies.
4. Award decisions will be made by the Awards Committee of the Texas Historical Commission, based on recommendations of a committee of Community Heritage Development Division staff, with ratification and final approval by the full Commission.

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Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Preserving History

PURPOSE: This award recognizes an individual, organization, or project that has significantly contributed to the understanding or preservation of Texas history. It is specifically designed to recognize achievements in preservation planning, historic site identification, preservation of significant archival or artifact collections, or research that leads to a greater understanding of state or local history. One award will be presented at the Real Places Conference, although the Commission may choose not to present an award in any given year.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed two double-spaced pages) of the achievement(s)
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. A resumé or vita if the nominee is an individual
 - e. A list of all persons involved in the achievement if the nominee is an organization, institution or agency
2. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered.
3. Only project work completed within the previous two calendar years is eligible for entry.
4. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations.
5. Award decisions will be made by the Awards Committee of the Texas Historical Commission, based on recommendations of a committee of History Programs Division staff, with ratification and final approval by the full Commission.

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Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Historic Architecture

PURPOSE: This award recognizes an architect, architectural firm, individual, organization, community, or project that has made a significant contribution to the preservation of Texas' architectural heritage. One award will be presented at the Real Places Conference, although the Commission may choose not to present an award in any given year.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A description of the achievement(s), including: project name; project address; historical designation(s), if any; date of completion
 - c. A single-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. Up to 20 digital images necessary to adequately document the project or body of work if the nominee is being recognized for sustained work over a period of time
 - e. A resumé or vita if the nominee is an individual
 - f. A list of project team members to be recognized for the project, if applicable
2. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered.
3. Individually nominated projects must have been completed within the previous two calendar years. Nominations for collective bodies of work should include, but are not limited to, recent work.
4. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations. Only projects substantially completed and meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, 1992, or revised (as interpreted by the Texas Historical Commission) are eligible.
5. Award decisions will be made by the Awards Committee of the Texas Historical Commission, based on recommendations of a committee of Architecture Division staff, with ratification and final approval by the full Commission.

DEADLINE: NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 5 P.M. ON AUGUST 15, 2026.

Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Media Achievement

PURPOSE: This award promotes excellence in reporting by print or electronic media on preservation and/or heritage tourism issues, increasing awareness of the state's historic and prehistoric resources. One award will be presented at the Real Places Conference, although the Commission may choose not to present an award in any given year.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed nomination form
 - b. A concise description, not to exceed two double-spaced pages, of the achievement(s)
 - c. A copy of the article, videotape, audio tape, etc., as applicable to the format of the media achievement(s) being nominated
 - d. A single paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
2. Each nomination may also include supporting documentation to illustrate the nomination narrative. Letters in support of the nomination will not be considered.
3. Only project work completed within the previous two calendar years is eligible for entry.
4. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations.
5. Award decisions will be made by the Awards Committee of the Texas Historical Commission, based on recommendations of a committee of Public Information and Education Division staff, with ratification and final approval by the full Commission.

DEADLINE: NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 5 P.M. ON AUGUST 15, 2026.

Texas Historical Commission Award of Merit in Historic Preservation

PURPOSE: This award recognizes the efforts and/or contributions of an individual or organization involved in preserving Texas' cultural and historical resources. Awards will be presented locally at a time and place deemed to give the most beneficial recognition to the recipient. Commission members and THC staff will participate in local presentations as time and resources allow. The Award of Merit will not be presented at the Real Places Conference.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each nomination must include:
 - a. A completed cover form
 - b. A concise description (not to exceed one double-spaced page) of the achievement(s)
 - c. A one-paragraph synopsis of the achievement(s)
 - d. A resumé or vita if the nominee is an individual
 - e. A list of all persons involved in the achievement if the nominee is an organization
2. Award decisions will be made by a three-member committee consisting of Texas Historical Commission staff members, with final approval by the Executive Director.
3. The nominee's efforts/contributions must be consistent with THC programs, policies, and preservation recommendations.

Please attach this form to each nomination and mail to: History Programs Division, Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711. (For UPS/surface delivery, send to 1511 N. Colorado St., Austin, TX, 78701.) Alternatively, you may submit digital application packets to awards@thc.texas.gov. Please feel free to make copies of this form as needed. Call the History Programs Division at 512-463-5853 with questions or for assistance.

DEADLINE: NOMINATIONS MAY BE SUBMITTED AT ANY TIME DURING THE YEAR. A nomination may not be considered for the Award of Merit while being considered for another THC preservation award.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION AWARDS
Nomination Cover Form

Nominee _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone (_____) _____

E-Mail Address _____

Texas State Representative _____

Texas State Senator _____

Nomination Submitted By _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone (_____) _____

E-Mail Address _____

Please complete one cover form for each award nomination.

Select one:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governor's Award for Historic Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Anice B. Read Award of Excellence in Community Heritage Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ruth Lester Lifetime Achievement Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Preserving History |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John Ben Shepperd County Historical Commission Leadership Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Historic Architecture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> George Christian Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Media Achievement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John L. Nau, III Award of Excellence in Museums | <input type="checkbox"/> Texas Historical Commission Award of Merit in Historic Preservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curtis D. Tunnell Lifetime Achievement Award in Archeology | |

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