



100 THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED

Dedicated to the Preservation of Spanish Colonial Architecture in Balboa Park

SPRING 2009

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Michael Kelly

One hundred years ago, on July 9, 1909, G. Aubrey Davidson, president and founder of the Southern Trust & Savings Bank and president of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, proposed to the Chamber the idea of hosting a World's Fair in San Diego:

For twenty years this organization, and the entire Pacific Coast, has waited for the building of the Panama Canal. It occurs to me that the opening should be the signal for San Diego to put on a great celebration; not just a county or state fair, but an international exposition.

San Diego's population of fewer than 40,000 was about what it had been in 1887 at the peak of San Diego's "great boom." A World's Fair would direct the attention of the nation to what would soon become the first American port of call on the Pacific Coast north of the Panama Canal.

Davidson's proposal was met with skepticism at first. It seemed improbable that a small town could invite the world to visit and be prepared to entertain and host a million guests. But the citizens of San Diego quickly warmed to the idea and supported the first bond issue, raising a million dollars.

Davidson later joined efforts to save the 1915 Exposition's "temporary buildings" when they were in danger of being torn down, first in 1922 and again in 1933, when Gertrude Gilbert led the campaign to save several condemned structures. The Chamber of Commerce



Join us for our Annual Meeting Friday, May 29th, at the Balboa Park Club

Guest speaker Romy Wyllie, author of *Bertram Goodhue: His Life and Residential Architecture* State Senator Christine Kehoe will present these awards on behalf of The Committee of One Hundred:

Gertrude Gilbert Award
Milford Wayne Donaldson and David Marshall

Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue Award
Gilbert Aubrey Davidson

answered her call and joined her effort to preserve the aging buildings. Shortly after that, the City decided to host the California Pacific Exposition in 1935.

Gilbert Aubrey Davidson has been selected by The Committee of One Hundred as the first recipient of the Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue Award. During his lifetime Davidson was recognized many times by the citizens of San Diego for his dedication to our city. We honor him now once again to keep alive the memory of this remarkable man.

As the 2015 Exposition Centennial approaches we must all dream big just as Aubrey Davidson did one hundred years ago. We have a once-in-a-century opportunity to celebrate San Diego's Panama-California Exposition and Balboa Park's "Dream City."

Gertrude Gilbert Award

Milford Wayne Donaldson & David Marshall honored

“I am fascinated by how temporary the Balboa Park structures were,” exclaimed Wayne Donaldson. “Wood blocks, not concrete, comprised the foundations, and there were no fasteners, only nails. Staff plaster, typically used only on interiors, was the crudest and quickest method of construction of the exteriors of the temporary 1915 Panama-California Exposition buildings. Of course, they soon deteriorated. The California Pacific International Exposition buildings of 1935 were unique. They were done so quickly, some within 90 days! Even the plantings were installed quickly, only three or four days before the fair opened. Many of them were obtained from the surrounding neighbors for cash on the spot,” continued Mr. Donaldson.



Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, California State Historic Preservation Officer since his 2004 appointment by Governor Schwarzenegger, previously had a successful twenty-six year practice as a preservation architect. His firm, Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson,

FAIA, Inc., was selected for the House of Hospitality reconstruction, which occurred from 1992 to 1997. The Foreign Arts Building, built for the 1915 exposition, was altered and renamed the House of Hospitality for the 1935 exposition. “In terms of materials originally used to construct the House of Hospitality, I would refer to them as ‘movie set style.’ The light fixtures (lanterns), which appeared to be cast bronze, were actually Upson board, a type of cardboard used for building stage sets. We reproduced them out of more lasting cast aluminum. “The House of Hospitality is the favorite project. It was so challenging,” revealed Mr. Donaldson. The National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1998 bestowed upon the House of Hospitality its honor award, the first

ever granted for a reconstructed building, and the only building in San Diego to win this prestigious award. This high profile project went on to win over twenty awards.



David Marshall, AIA, president and senior principal of Heritage Architecture & Planning, Inc., had been employed by Mr. Donaldson’s firm. During that time, he served as the project architect for the House of Hospitality reconstruction, the first large project he was involved in, and

the largest building the firm had ever done. For more than four years Mr. Marshall and his team of student interns documented the building’s dismantling and reconstruction. “While salvaging the beams, we made an exciting discovery: The dining room ceiling had exquisite hand-painted stenciling. It had been covered with acoustic tiles and plaster and no one knew it was there,” shared Mr. Marshall. “The biggest challenge of the reconstruction project was to make sure all the details were right, such as the texture of the stucco and the color of the window trim. The meticulous and exacting work required specialty contractors and subcontractors, who weren’t all that easy to find,” added Mr. Marshall.

The highly ornamented exterior of the House of Hospitality is adorned with Latin American coats of arms and some invented heraldic symbols. Carleton Winslow was the building’s original architect. He worked under the direction of Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, the design and consulting architect for the 1915 exposition. Richard Requa was the architect in charge of the building’s later modifications and its restoration in preparation for the 1935 exposition. The phenomenal House of Hospitality, in its present form, is nearly an identical replication of the modified temporary building. The House of Hospitality is

Annual Luncheon Meeting ~ Friday, May 29th

permanent and expected to last for many decades. A labor of love indeed.

Several other Balboa Park projects were completed by Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, Inc. and its successor Heritage Architecture & Planning, Inc. David Marshall explained the firm's transition. Mr. Donaldson sold his company to Heritage Architecture & Planning, Inc. All of Heritage Architecture & Planning's owners had been employed by Mr. Donaldson's firm. "Our firm is basically 'The Son of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson,'" noted Mr. Marshall. "We were able to keep the entire firm together for the transition." Mr. Marshall is president and one of the owners of the successor firm, which is responsible for the ongoing business and several Balboa Park projects.

Both firms consulted for many significant Balboa Park restorations. They include the Aerospace Museum and construction of its courtyard cover; the House of Charm; the 2005 Cabrillo Bridge exterior restoration, which utilized 5,000 tons of custom-tinted concrete and 25,000 stainless steel pins; the California Building restoration and interior modifications (where the San Diego Museum of Man is located); the San Diego Museum of Art exterior reconstruction; the

Spreckels Organ Pavilion exterior lighting restoration, which involved replacement of about 1800 sockets cast directly into the ornamentation; and two ongoing projects, the California Tower seismic retrofit and the California Quadrangle roof restoration. These men and their companies have played an integral role in preserving Balboa Park's exposition buildings. Their work allows us to enjoy them today and for generations to come.

The Committee of One Hundred created the Gertrude Gilbert Award to recognize those who have contributed significantly to the preservation of our unique and historic Balboa Park buildings and spaces. This award is named in honor of the 1915 exposition's music program director, 'Miss Gilbert,' who vehemently fought at a critical juncture in the 1930s to save the exposition's buildings.

In recognition of their outstanding contributions to the preservation of Balboa Park's exposition buildings, including the superb reconstruction of the House of Hospitality, The Committee of One Hundred's Gertrude Gilbert Award will be presented to Milford Wayne Donaldson and David Marshall, architects and preservationists, at our annual meeting to be held on May 29, 2009.

— Pamela Hartwell

Help us preserve Balboa Park's historic architecture.
Make your check to The Committee of One Hundred and mail it to:

THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED
Balboa Park Administration Building
2125 Park Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92103-4753



Photo by Michael Seljos

Annual Luncheon Meeting ~ Friday, May 29, 11:30am ~ Balboa Park Club

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Tables will seat 8 people. If you wish to reserve a table,
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THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED

Dedicated to the Preservation of Spanish Colonial Architecture in Balboa Park

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