



The statewide advocate for Rhode Island's historic places

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2024 RHODY AWARDS: “AUDIENCE AWARD” VOTING OPEN NOW

Preserve Rhode Island (Preserve RI) celebrated the honorees of the 2024 Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation on Sunday at Rosecliff in Newport. They included a range of projects and people from across the state.

Each year, Preserve RI celebrates the remarkable achievements of individuals and organizations for their efforts in utilizing historic preservation to strengthen our communities, improve quality of life, and address social challenges. Awardees span from Newport to Pawtucket to West Warwick, showing that preservation efforts impact communities across the state. This year's recipients are being honored for work that includes:

- protecting and restoring iconic landmarks that enhance the state's tourism industry and connects Rhode Islanders to our shared history
- converting abandoned mill buildings into much needed housing (including affordable housing) as well as spaces for community services
- adapting historic houses for both contemporary living and rising sea levels

An independent jury of historians, architects, developers, community leaders, and preservationists had the difficult task of narrowing down the nominations to only 10 finalists. Valerie Talmage, Executive Director of Preserve RI said, *“The Rhody Awards celebrates ordinary people taking extraordinary actions to make our world better--place by place, project by project. It truly is wonderful to find heroes here close to home.”*

Preserve RI is the only statewide non-profit focused on historic preservation. Says Talmage, *“While celebrating the wonderful work of our awardees is important, it is equally important to continue to work to support historic preservation across the state. At Preserve RI, we are proud to be at the forefront of helping create sensible zoning laws, incentives like the State Historic Tax Credit, and programs that advise, train, and provide funding for owners of historic properties.”*

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To learn more about this year's Rhody Awardees, videos of each winner can be viewed on the Preserve RI website: [2024 Rhody Award Winner Videos | preserveri](#). The public is encouraged to vote for their favorite project and help Preserve RI determine the recipient of the Audience Award. Voting is open until Friday, October 25th at noon.

The 2024 Rhody Awardees are:

Cornelis J. de Boer - *Antoinette Downing Volunteer Award*

Awarded for his remarkable tenure on the Providence Historic District Commission. From 1988 to 2023 he provided a depth of knowledge that models how volunteers on local Historic District Commissions can guide applicants to best preservation practices with expertise, advice, and exceptional public relations.

Wendy Nicholas Dorsey - *Frederick C. Williamson Professional Award*

In celebration of her 43-year career, beginning as Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society and later at the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Northeast Regional Office. She excelled in expanding educational programs, leading legislative campaigns, and fostering community engagement in preservation efforts.

Wanskuck Mill Complex (Providence)- *Preservation Project Award*

A local developer's seven-year undertaking of the Wanskuck Mill revitalization has brought critical housing and investment to the underserved North End of Providence, while restoring a significant and underutilized historic resource back to productive use. This project was made possible with Federal and State Historic Tax credits.

Rosecliff (Newport) - *Preservation Project Award*

The Preservation Society of Newport County completed one of the most extensive and complicated projects in its 78-year history with the restoration of Rosecliff Mansion. The \$7.4 million scope included interior and exterior restoration, from replicating the original 3,200-square-foot Ballroom oak floor to full window restoration.

Arctic Mills (West Warwick) - *Preservation Project Award*

The adaptive re-use of a 125,000 sq ft former 19th-century textile mill building led to the creation of 136 residential units, including 31 workforce housing units, resident amenity spaces, and commercial space. This project has brought much-needed housing and revitalization to West Warwick, a town with one of the highest poverty rates in the state.

Kenneth and Deborah McDonald (Newport) - *Homeowner Award*

Homeowners Kenneth and Deborah McDonald have successfully transformed a small (about 850 sq ft), rundown, historic cottage in the Point neighborhood into a

comfortable home with all the modern conveniences. The house, which sits adjacent to a flood zone, was raised proactively to increase climate resiliency. The general contractor they selected demonstrated meticulous care while undertaking this project.

Belmont Chapel (Newport) - Preservation Project Award

The Belmont Chapel Foundation is being awarded for their restoration of the Belmont Chapel, an important Architectural landmark and focal point of Island Cemetery. The chapel, abandoned and hidden from view, has been extensively restored in a way that is true to the high standards set by the original architects, George Champlin Mason and Sons, and Richard Morris Hunt.

Explore East Greenwich: Historic Interpretive Signs (East Greenwich) – Community Impact Award

The East Greenwich Historic Preservation Society (EGHPS) has greatly impacted the community's sense of place by installing a dozen narrated interpretive signs to form a walking trail through three centuries of Town history. The signs show photographs, drawings, and original artwork commissioned by the EGHPS, telling stories of women, Indigenous people, and the Black regiment formed during the Revolution.

390 Pine Street - Conant Thread New Office Building (Pawtucket) - Community Impact Award

Shri, an urban outreach healing arts and yoga program that prioritizes adults with intellectual abilities, serves students every year from schools, shelters, hospitals, senior centers, and social services. They will receive the Community Award for reimagining a dilapidated mill building into a rich community resource. The first floor houses a yoga studio, food bank, and arts center, with affordable and market-rate apartments on the second floor.

Friends of Plum Beach Lighthouse (North Kingstown) – Stewardship Award

This award is being presented to the Friends of Plum Beach Lighthouse for their long-term stewardship of Rhode Island's most visible lighthouse. After a metamorphosis in 2003, the group has maintained a high preservation standard through innovative funding strategies and dedication to maintenance.

About Preserve Rhode Island

Preserve Rhode Island is Rhode Island's statewide advocate for historic places. The 67-year-old nonprofit provides guidance for local preservation groups, finds productive and adaptive reuses for threatened buildings, advocates for the revitalization of historic places to stimulate local economies, and engages the community through public programs at Lippitt House Museum. Visit www.preserveri.org to learn more.

[Photos from the 2024 Rhody Awards can be found here.](#)

[Select images of the Rhody Award winners can be found here.](#)

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