



## Grants Spotlight

### South Texas Receives THF Grant Love

Recently, six Texas Historical Foundation directors from Corpus Christi and Uvalde journeyed to South Texas to deliver much-needed financial assistance to preservationists who were successful in securing THF grant funds. In addition to making the check presentations, board members also visited with the recipients to learn more about these two grant-winning history initiatives:

- **The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley CHAPS (Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools),**

Edinburg. According to project representative Roseann Garza-Bachman, “THF funds will allow professional color photographs to grace a book we are producing that will be used as an educational tool within our *Ancient Landscapes of South Texas* project. The publication will assist more than 60 Rio Grande Valley educators with the administration of lesson plans and curriculum also being developed for traveling trunks in K-12 classrooms.”



• **Starr County Historical Foundation,** Rio Grande City, is caretaker of the 1899 La Borde House, a National Register property built in Parisian style by merchant Francois La Borde. The historic structure needed repair and an upgrade of the fire sprinkler system and gutters, issues the THF grant will help address.



THF grant proposals are reviewed and awarded quarterly. [See this page](#) for more information about how your organization might qualify and move its preservation work forward.

## Texas HERITAGE

### What is a Pysanka Egg?



Even though they represented different generations, Helen Widener and Michael Duda shared a love of all things Texas. Their lives intersected when both served as Texas Historical Foundation board members.

It was this connection—and the fact that such a young man could be motivated to preserve Texas history—that made an impression on Widener. When Michael passed away unexpectedly in 2020 and Widener learned of his generous bequeathal to THF, she felt compelled to act.

Widener created and gave a Ukrainian decorated memorial *rhea* egg to the family (a rhea is a large bird similar to an ostrich or emu that lays white eggs). The intricately designed egg art, called *pysanka*, has roots in Eastern Europe and was brought to this country by immigrants—many of whom came to work on the railroads—just as Mr. Duda’s grandfather did.

As Widener and Arkansas artist Lorrie Popow, a Ukrainian descendant who is considered to be a master of egg art, went through the design process, they worked to create a pysanka egg that would incorporate Michael’s own history with the state’s past. The result was a one-of-a-kind masterpiece featuring the Texas Alamo on one side and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame, Duda’s alma mater, on the other.

Widener recently presented the special gift to Michael’s parents Mary Lee and Fritz Duda. “This gesture is very special to our family. Helen and her friend have honored our son with this expression and wonderful work of art,” said Fritz Duda.

Texas HERITAGE readers will learn the whole story in the next issue of THF’s award-winning publication, which members receive every quarter.

**Join now to learn more about historic preservation around the state.**

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## Director Spotlight

### Marshall Doke Wins Statewide Award

For nearly four decades, Marshall J. Doke, Jr., a now-retired attorney from Dallas, has served the people of this state and historical preservationists by leading efforts aimed at saving its storied past.

In 1993, [he joined the Texas Historical Foundation](#), recruited others to the cause, promoted the state’s past during seminars he planned and in articles he researched and wrote, all while proudly wearing a Lone Star flag pin on his lapel. That tiny metal emblem was more than an adornment—for Doke, it was a conversation starter, allowing the Texas Lone Star opportunity to share Lone Star stories with anyone who asked about it.



For THF, he served in leadership positions during a particularly critical time, helped raise the organization’s profile, and fundraised while personally contributing his own financial resources to establish two endowments to assist in carrying out the organization’s mission.

In recognition of these efforts and his service to THF and other state history organizations, Marshall J. Doke, Jr., was named this year’s winner of the [Ruth Lester Lifetime Achievement Award by the Texas Historical Commission](#). Catherine McKnight, vice chair of the THC, made the presentation to Doke at a luncheon in McKinney on April 22 that was attended by Doke’s family and fellow Foundation directors.

During the ceremony, Doke reminded attendees that Texas is different from every other state and has a history that deserves to be saved. He closed by saying that he was honored to receive this special recognition and prouder still that his efforts might have made a difference in the fight to save the Lone Star past.

## Website Update

### Saving Austin’s Treaty Oak: A Labor of Love

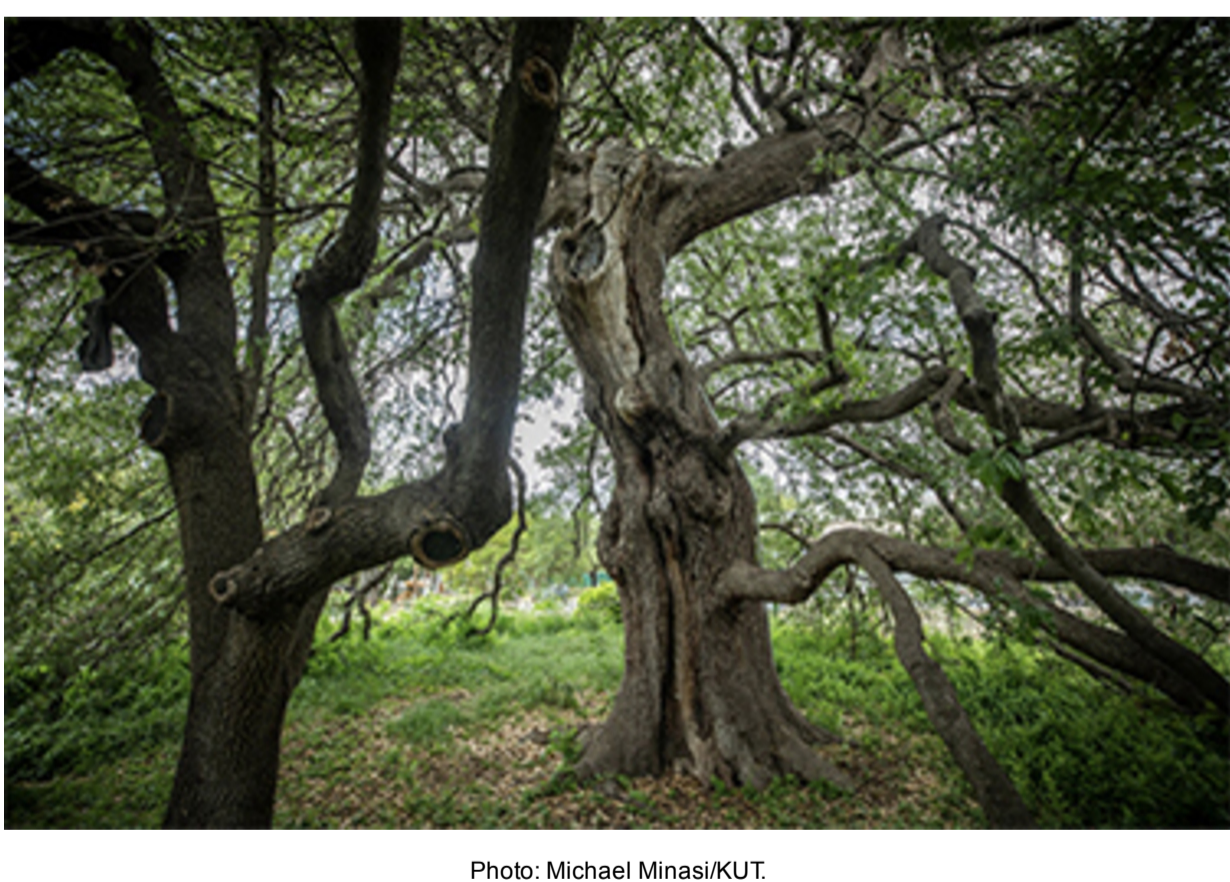


Photo: Michael Minasi/KUT.

Trees might not come to mind first when talking about historic preservation. But Austin’s Treaty Oak is said to be more than 600 years old, and its history is bona fide, as it was reportedly part of a group of trees known as the Council Oaks because tribal meetings happened there.

The Treaty Oak’s centuries-old history added another chapter in 1989 when it was intentionally poisoned. That event brought shock, outrage, and a new determination to keep the tree alive. KUT Radio in Austin told the story recently and agreed to let THF share the saga with its audience as part of this month’s history blog.

[CHECK IT OUT!](#)

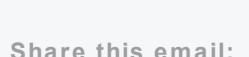


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