



## City Council

### Special Recognition - Proclamation Recognizing Olympia Heritage Month and Review of 2021 Preservation Award Nominations

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#### **Title**

Special Recognition - Proclamation Recognizing Olympia Heritage Month and Review of 2021 Preservation Award Nominations

#### **Recommended Action**

##### **Committee Recommendation:**

Proclaim May as Olympia Heritage Month and review the 2021 Heritage Award Nominees recommended by the General Government Committee and the Heritage Commission.

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Proclaim May as Olympia Heritage Month and review the 2021 Historic Preservation Award nominees.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to proclaim May as Heritage Month in Olympia and review nominations for 2021 Historic Preservation Awards.

##### **Staff Contact:**

Marygrace Goddu, Historic Preservation Officer, Community Planning & Development, 360.753.8031

##### **Presenter(s):**

Marygrace Goddu, Historic Preservation Officer  
Holly Davies, Heritage Commission Chair

##### **Background and Analysis:**

In May of each year, the City of Olympia recognizes the importance of our local history and heritage by declaring May as Heritage Month and hosting a series of educational events. Heritage Month 2021 will kick off a year-long focus by the Heritage Commission on new and creative ways to share local history and increase everyone's access to it; as well as recognizing and celebrating the stories and contributions of historically under-represented and marginalized groups in our community.

These efforts are motivated and informed by the learnings of 2020, when the Black Lives Matter Movement and the global pandemic together highlighted our long and continuing history of systemic injustice and social inequity. The pressures of the pandemic also inspired new and creative means of gathering, communicating, and educating, lowering barriers of time and space and enabling greater access in unexpected ways.

The Heritage Commission also works to promote excellence in historic preservation. To that end, each year in May the Commission nominates and recommends recipients for Olympia's Annual Historic Preservation Awards. These awards recognize people, projects, and places that serve as models for championing our cultural and built heritage.

This year there are four nominees for 2021 Historic Preservation Awards brought forward by the Heritage Commission and recommended for Council approval by the General Government Committee. There is an item on the Consent Calendar to approve these nominations.

Presentation of the awards will be held at an online Heritage Month event hosted by the Heritage Commission yet to be scheduled, later in May.

In the unprecedented Pandemic year of 2020, in which the norms of human interaction had to be re-imagined, the Commission's nominations for 2021 recognize heritage, history, and culture bearers who have worked in a variety of mediums to creatively connect, educate, tell our stories, and share our past.

The 2021 Historic Preservation Award Nominees:

- **Shane Anderson, Documentary Film maker and Storyteller** is recognized for his historical and current documentation of the land, water, and wildlife in our region and the complexity of human efforts to protect them. Shane's films have educated the public, inspired public policy, and communicated calls to action to protect, honor, and preserve these places that backdrop our city, from the Olympic Mountains to our local waterways. Historical background is a strong component of each of Shane's productions.
- **Playwright Bryan Willis** is nominated for his play, **The Hotel Olympian 100th Anniversary Grand Gala Extravaganza**, which successfully uses historic narratives to entertain and educate audiences. Using the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hotel Olympian in 2020 as his take-off point, Willis' play is set in the Hotel's Grand Opening event. With the clever use of a fortune-teller, he playfully takes observers on a 100-year, forward journey into Olympia's history and current landmarks, invoking a renewed sense of community, longevity, and a few good laughs. Originally planned as a live on-location play, Willis reproduced this work as a radio play in response to the social gathering restrictions of the Pandemic and maintained a 2020 release coinciding with the 100-year anniversary of the Olympian Hotel's opening.
- **The Thurston County Historic Commission** is nominated for their coordination and publication of ***Thurston County Water, Woods & Prairies, Essays on the History of Washington's Capital County***, an extensive account of the history of Washington's Capital County, and the first published in 100 years. The entire project was conducted with unpaid

volunteers starting in 2012. Featuring the work of nine local and regional historians and five essayists, this publication adds new information to the historical record of our region. The extensively researched and indexed publication provides valuable sources, including a wealth of historic images, drawings, and maps, for community historians. It was published in 2019 with support from the Thurston County Commissioners.

- **Alicia Elliott for McIntyre House Restoration and Placemaking** - Alicia Elliott's innovative effort blends placemaking with historic preservation in a prominent block on Olympia's Westside. Alicia's 2012 vision to create a neighborhood center and gathering place on the site of the former Rowland Lumber building at the corner of Harrison and Division led to the creation of West Central Park. Building on this success, she acquired and restored nearby historic homes including the 1892 era McIntyre House, which has been carefully restored and is now a successful inn. In less than a decade Alicia has created new public green space, preserved historic sites, sparked local economic development, and promoted sustainable development, in a testament to what one person can accomplish and an example for others to follow.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

General community interest in preserving, enhancing, and championing the people, places and stories that reveal our city's unique character.

**Options:**

1. Proclaim May as Heritage Month and review the 2021 Preservation Award nominees.
2. Do not proclaim May as Heritage Month or review the 2021 Preservation Award nominees.
3. Proclaim May as Heritage Month and modify the 2021 Preservation Award Nominees.

**Financial Impact:**

Heritage Month activities will not have a financial impact. Preservation Awards have a minimal cost to create certificates and awards using reclaimed City street bricks.

**Attachments:**

Proclamation