



LANDMARKS LETTER

Crystal Spring Farm

by Andrew Weil

BECAUSE OF ITS NAME, MOST ST. LOUISANS associate the land that comprises the Soulard neighborhood primarily, if not exclusively, with Antoine Soulard and his wife Julia (Cerre) Soulard. A good portion of the northern and eastern sides of the neighborhood today was land owned by the Soulards and subdivided by Julia after her husband's death, including the two city blocks she set aside for the present day Market, and the land upon which St. Vincent de Paul church stands. The latter is located immediately north of where Julia's home (constructed c. 1837) once stood for over a century before being demolished in 1952 for Interstate 55. But while the Soulards loom large, William Russell and his heirs also played an important role in the development of a core portion of the neighborhood.

Like Soulard who had served as a land surveyor (among other roles) for the Spanish Crown prior to the Louisiana Purchase, Russell had been sent to St. Louis by Thomas Jefferson in 1804 to take over the position of Surveyor in the service of the American government. In this capacity, one of Russell's chief jobs was to investigate claims for land that had been granted by the Territory's former Spanish rulers. During his travels, he kept his eyes open for prime land and speculative opportunities for himself and managed to amass an enormous portfolio of property and with it, a fortune.

Russell was a shrewd businessman who knew how to convert land, however remote, into money. Illustrative of this ability was his speculative 1820 plat of a town called Little Rock amidst one of his essentially wilderness land claims in the newly organized Arkansas Territory. He then purportedly sold lots in the town to influential members of the territorial legislature at discounted prices, who then enriched themselves and Russell by voting to establish the capital of the future state at that location.



Current Boundaries of Crystal Spring Farm/Union Park as depicted in 1875.



OLD RUSSELL FARM - 1842

Courtesy of Missouri History Museum.



Can you guess the building this architectural detail is from? See *Elements* on page 2.

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LANDMARKSLETTER

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Elements

WHITE WATER TOWER

THE ELEMENT SHOWN on the front cover is the ornate Corinthian capital that graces St. Louis’ “White” water tower. Designed by George I. Barnett and completed in 1871, this tower has been an unmistakable component of the skyline of north St. Louis since Ulysses S. Grant was President. It’s difficult to see how amazing this work of artistic, architectural cast iron is from the ground, but a 185 foot man-lift makes a big difference!

This fall, the architecture and engineering firm of Wiss, Janney, Elstner completed an assessment of St. Louis’ two north side water towers commissioned by Landmarks Association. The results of those inspections indicate that both structures are sound, but in need of substantial repairs. Tuck pointing is a major need with both towers as is work on roofing and the restoration of the White Tower’s capital. The assessment provided a detailed and prioritized plan for the work that needs to be done to prepare the towers for another 100+ years. It also included a rough cost estimate of approximately five million dollars that will be needed to accomplish these goals.

The engineer’s reports have been provided to the owners of the towers (the Water and Parks Departments respectively) along with other City leaders. We will be exploring several intriguing options for raising needed funds, but our first (albeit tiny) effort is already underway. Working with Diane Katzman Design, Landmarks Association is offering unique Bissell (Red) Water Tower Christmas ornaments this year for sale and in exchange for water tower designated gifts. Next year we plan to make another ornament celebrating the White Tower as well. Get your tower ornament(s) today by calling the office or ordering online through our website. The ornaments are retailing at \$18.85 (+ tax) in honor of the year the Red Tower was built (see below, right).

Dear Friends

EARLIER THIS MONTH, you received a letter highlighting a few of the organization’s accomplishments over the course of 2018 along with a request for an additional contribution as the year draws to a close. I would like to humbly reiterate that appeal, and to remind you how heavily we rely on the financial support of Landmarks’ members to maintain operations. St. Louis is too important a city and our architectural heritage is too valuable an asset, for us to allow the voice of preservation advocacy to fade.

I ask that you help strengthen that voice for the coming year by taking a moment to consider the things that make you proud to be a St. Louisan, and to contribute to the organizations and institutions that make our community great. With your help, Landmarks Association will step confidently into 2019 and celebrate 60 years (!) of research, promotion, and advocacy on behalf of St. Louis’ architectural heritage.

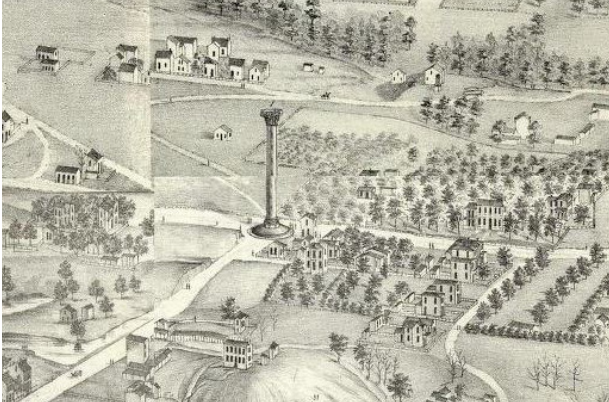
Also, as 2018 draws to a close and our lease in the Lammert Building expires, we are exploring exciting opportunities for the organization’s new home. We hope to be able to make an announcement about a plan for our new office soon, so stand by!

Sincerely,
Andrew B. Weil
Executive Director

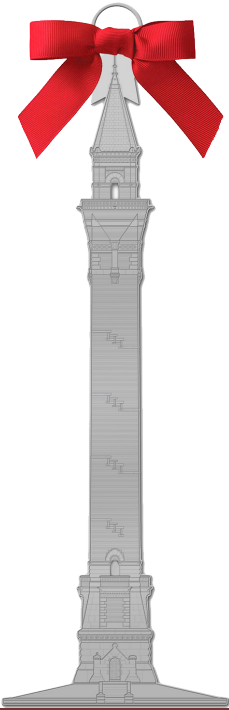
Red Water Tower ornaments can be purchased by adding \$18.85 (in honor of the year construction started) to your annual gift, by calling the office at 314-421-6474, or at www.landmarks-stl.org.



Engineers inspecting White Tower.



White Tower, 1875. Pictorial St. Louis.



CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL —
Bowen & Miller, and the Founding of the St. Louis
Architectural Association

by Andrew Weil

JOHN STEVENS BOWEN WAS BORN in Georgia in 1829 and entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1848. After graduation he was stationed at the Cavalry School at Carlisle Pennsylvania, and then sent to Jefferson Barracks where he met and married Mary Kennerly of Carondelet. He resigned from the military in 1856 and returned to Savannah, Georgia where he briefly practiced architecture before returning to St. Louis in 1857. Back in St. Louis, Bowen continued working as an architect with partner Charles Crosby Miller (frequently listed as C.C. Miller). The partnership of Bowen & Miller established an office at #97 Chestnut Street near the riverfront and Bowen lived at a nearby boarding house while he designed and constructed a home for his family on Carondelet’s “Quality Hill” at what is today 6727 Michigan Avenue. This home survives, although it has been enlarged with an addition and originally had a flat roof.

It’s unclear how Bowen and Miller came to work with each other. Bowen was an accomplished military man from Georgia—Miller a civilian from Springfield, Massachusetts. It may be that they teamed up simply because they were both trying to break into professional practice in the city at the same time. Miller came to St. Louis to ply his trade in 1856 and Bowen in 1857; both men were in their mid 20s.

While young, they were clearly well respected by their peers and considered worthy of professional esteem. In the spring of 1858, the two were part of a group of the most prominent architects in the city who came together to form what may have been St. Louis’ first architectural trade association.

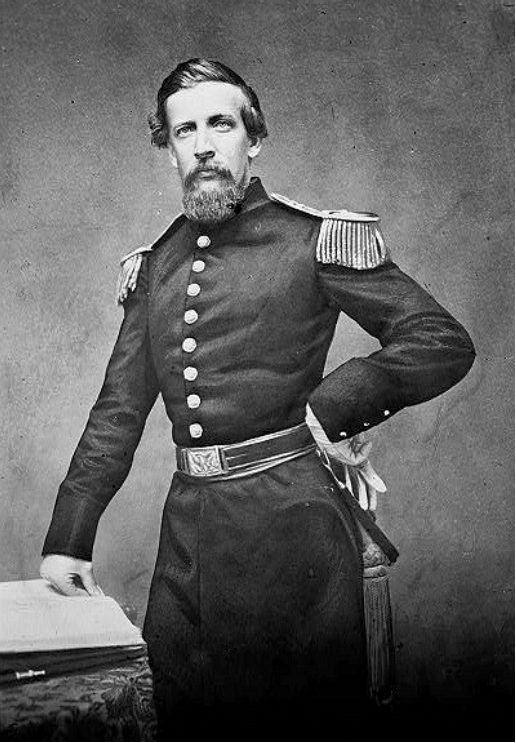
On St. Patrick’s Day, architects John Johnston, W.B. Olmstead, George I. Barnett, Thomas Walsh, Wm. F. Stacy, George Mitchell, Wm. Rumbold, Patrick Walsh, Thomas Brady, Francis Tunica, J. H. McClure, A.H. Piquenard, Charles H. Peck, Bowen and Miller met to discuss the formation of the St. Louis Architectural Association. The purpose of the Association was to protect and standardize the architectural trade by establishing professional qualifications and minimum prices for different categories of work. The group elected a committee that included Bowen to draft a constitution. By April they had elected officers, which included Johnston as President, George I. Barnett and Thomas Walsh as Vice Presidents, C. C. Miller as Recording Secretary and Bowen as Corresponding Secretary (among other officers).

While the Association had come together cordially, controversy arose in early summer when Vice President Walsh resigned in a huff. The Association had censured him over prices he had charged for the design of the O’Fallon Polytechnic Institute because his cost schedule for the work did not adhere to the Association’s constitution. Despite the fact that Walsh could prove he had bid the project prior to the formation of the group, he was still expected to revise his costs to comply with the new rules, which was not something he was willing to do.

Despite the departure of Walsh, the Association continued to grow with the addition of R. S. Mitchell, and a “Mr. Isaacs” (perhaps a young Henry G. Isaacs?) as formal members in addition to two honorary members nominated by John Bowen. While the formal end of the apparently short-lived Association remains a mystery, the divergent paths of Bowen’s honorary nominees (and of Bowen himself) give a strong indication that the Civil War caused an irreparable rupture of the organization.

In a meeting of the Association at Bowen & Miller’s office on what was no doubt a stifling July 19th, Bowen nominated, and his colleagues unanimously approved, both Henry Taylor Blow and Meriwether Lewis Clark as honorary members of the group. Politically, these men were at

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Major-General John Stevens Bowen.



Christ Church as it appears today.



The Bowen home today, 6727 Michigan Avenue.

opposite poles of the looming national conflict, as were Blow and Bowen. Looking through the prism of history, these choices provide a fascinating glimpse into the reality of how the schism of the War shattered the professional and social relations of people who had previously been able to put their differences aside.

We can only wonder what was discussed when Blow entertained the Association at his home in early August 1858. At the time, Bowen was a member of the Missouri Volunteer Militia which was actively engaged in fighting radical abolitionists on the Kansas Border. This was in contrast with his host who had financed Dred and Harriet Scott’s failed freedom suit. Moreover, when the Supreme Court ruled against the Scotts, Blow’s brother had purchased and manumitted them. Within less than four years of what everyone agreed was a lovely Saturday spent at Blow’s Carondelet estate, Bowen and Clark would be serving as commissioned officers in the Confederate Army and Blow serving the Federal government by appointment of Lincoln himself.

While political differences and attrition of members at the outbreak of the Civil War seems to have been what ended the St. Louis Architectural Association, there is no doubt that the War is what ended the partnership of Bowen & Miller. Between 1858 and 1860 the partnership had enjoyed a prosperous, if brief, career. Their account book spanning that time period is in the Bowen Papers at the Missouri History Museum Library and provides an interesting view into the workaday lives of architects in the mid 19th century. Bowen and Miller seem to have spent most of their time preparing plans for houses including at least two extant designs in Carondelet. One of these building’s is Bowen’s own home which was completed c.1859 at 6727 Michigan Avenue. The other is that of Hubert Primm at 6321 Vermont Avenue.

Also listed in their ledger are fees for diverse jobs including designing a tenement at 9th and O’Fallon, conducting a structural inspection of Lafayette Hall, “staking out a barn and stable,” providing specifications for a “gardener’s house,” measuring grades for a cesspool and waste pipe, and drawings for a house in Tiffin, Ohio. On the other end of the spectrum, they prepared plans for a five story building near 4th and Chestnut, an unspecified Catholic Church for Adolph Paul, and



The Primm home today, 6321 Vermont Avenue.

also designed and supervised the construction of a building for the “Princeton College Association” (probably the now defunct Presbyterian Cumberland College) in Caldwell County Kentucky. Perhaps the most intriguing and by far the most lucrative entry in the book is a \$1,250 receivable owed by prominent New York architect Leopold Eidlitz for Bowen and Miller’s work “superintending” the construction of St. Louis’ Christ Church Cathedral at 13th and Locust.

The last entries in the account book are from early 1860. Following the election of Lincoln, the country edged closer to the brink and Bowen’s military responsibilities likely began to supersede his architectural career. Throughout his time in St. Louis, Bowen had remained active in the Missouri Volunteer Militia serving under Daniel Frost. He was with Frost in uniform when violence erupted in St. Louis at Camp Jackson in May of 1861. There he was captured and paroled by General Nathaniel Lyon. He then left the city, never to return.

Bowen headed south to Tennessee where he accepted a commission as a Colonel in the Confederate Army and began raising the 1st Missouri Infantry Regiment. He later rose to the rank of Major General before dying of dysentery following the siege of Vicksburg. He reportedly participated in negotiating the city’s surrender with General Grant and refused an offer of medical assistance from the General’s personal surgeon. Grant later wrote in his memoirs that he had known and respected Bowen in Carondelet before the War.

When War broke out, Charles Miller left Missouri for Toledo, Ohio where he distinguished himself as perhaps the city’s most prolific architect of the 1860s designing important commercial buildings, churches and residences for the city’s elite. He also published multiple books of architectural designs for both commercial and residential buildings.

After the great fire, Miller moved to Chicago where he continued to work as an architect and later as an artist until his death around 1903. In 1885, a biography published by the Chicago Board of Trade credited Miller with having designed the “Old Board of Trade Building, the Hamlin & Hale Building, the Church of the Messiah, Plymouth Church, and First Baptist Church” along with many private residences.

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Around 1837, Russell purchased a 76-acre tract south of St. Louis. He named the property Crystal Spring Farm and set about organizing it as a country estate. He began planting extensive orchards and a vineyard and recorded his activities in an agriculture diary he called his “orchard book.” This document survives and serves as a fascinating record of life on the property and gives insight into the people with whom Russell interacted.

For example, Russell records receiving specimens of various fruit trees from members of the Soulard family, George Sibley, and Mrs. Rufus Easton. He also mentions working alongside his “hands” to plant and fence the property. At least some of these hands were actually slaves. One man named “Washington” who appears in the book in 1835 planting apples with Russell is of particular interest because he appears again years later in a surprising place. While enslaved African Americans are unfortunately difficult to see in the historical record because documents like the federal slave schedules simply recorded them as numbers, a picture of Washington and his family has emerged.

Judging by the dates recorded in the Orchard Book, Washington was present on the Crystal Springs property as early as 1835. He started a family with his wife Mary and lived on the farm until the fall of 1847 when, to paraphrase Frederick Douglass, Washington stole himself. Russell published an advertisement seeking the return of one Washington Reed (his full name), Mary and their children Fielding, Matilda, and Malcolm. In the ad, Russell speculated the Reeds were heading for Chicago in a covered wagon accompanied by a white accomplice. He described Washington, as a thin and upright man of 40, well dressed and carrying an ivory headed cane.

In 1842 Russell built a large Federal style house out of skillfully dressed limestone on raised ground near the northwest corner of what is today 9th Street and Russell Avenue. That same year, his daughter Ann married a young attorney named Thomas Allen, who had recently moved to St. Louis from Massachusetts. Neither Russell nor the Allens are listed in the 1850 census, but they are reported to have made their primary home at Crystal Springs Farm during the 1840s and 1850s.

By 1845, Allen had taken over the recording entries in the Orchard Book. In it he described the elements of the farm including a spring fed brook, spring house, bee hives, well, poultry yard, stock yard, garden, coal house and carriage house. The land supported extensive plantings of apples, peaches, pears, plums, cherries, raspberries, and at least twelve varieties of grapes including a wild strain harvested by Russell from his lands near Helen, Arkansas.

The main house faced east and the view looked out over land that sloped down toward the river. Allen purchased an additional 30 acres of property east of the farm from John Cabanne in 1847 with the intention of subdividing the land for sale. In exchange for ceding right-of-ways for public roads to the City (three to be named Russell, Ann, and Allen respectively), he exacted a commitment to keep the subdivisions free of offensive factories and “bawdy” occupations. Well aware of the massive influx of Germans taking place at the time, he made a brilliant speculative gambit by selling, on very favorable terms, a block of land to Bishop Peter Kenrick. This land was intended as the future home of a new church (Sts. Peter and Paul at 8th and Allen) that would serve the burgeoning German community. Allen bet that parishioners would want to build their homes and businesses nearby. They did.

By the 1860s, the area we now know as Soulard was becoming a densely settled immigrant neighborhood. Many breweries were established to take advantage of the extensive cave system in the area and proximity to the river for harvesting ice. Among these were the Green Tree, Gambrinus, Stumpf, Excelsior, and Bavarian (owned by one E. Anheuser & Co.) to name a few. Other industries thrived along the riverfront and the St. Louis Arsenal, Marine Hospital, Lutheran Hospital, churches and turnvereins were institutional anchors. No longer was the area the pastoral retreat the Russells and Allens had enjoyed less than twenty years earlier and the family departed for more tranquil environs.



Russell/Allen home, Northwest Corner 9th and Russell. Crystal Springs Farm.

Still, the core of the former farm property surrounding the Russell/ Allen home remained an open tract. Stretching across the long block between what are now Menard and 9th (west-east), Russell and Allen (south-north) the land had been left undivided in order to provide a buffer for the family home.

It’s unclear why Allen didn’t just subdivide that property as well immediately after the family departed, but it may have been because there was actually a financial opportunity in leaving it alone. Many neighborhoods of the era were so crowded that people craved safe, open spaces for recreational purposes. Prior to the creation of the city’s park system, the primary options for outdoor recreation were places like cemeteries, beer gardens, fairgrounds, and privately operated “pleasure resorts.” When not working or in school, children entertained themselves in places like alleys, vacant lots, factory yards, rail yards, and on the levee. As a result, the newspapers of the day were predictably crowded with stories of children drowning, being crushed by freight cars, falling into open holes, kicked by animals, scalded by steam, and burned by chemicals. The realities of urban life in the mid 19th century created a market for open space and Crystal Spring Farm was well positioned to serve it.

Sometime between 1860 and 1862, Allen leased the land and family home to Hermann Bachmann who opened it to the public as the Union Park Pleasure Resort. The park was home to activities like athletic competitions, balloon ascensions, picnics, fairs, concerts and dances. Bachmann left the old trees of the farm in place for shade and planted extensive flower beds throughout. He also created a partnership with brewer Wilhelm Stumpf, whose brewery was located one block south on the site of today’s Pontiac Park. Stumpf supplied the beer, Bachmann provided the entertainment, and Allen deposited the rent checks.

Bachmann retired in about 1869 and operation of the park was taken over by Oscar Roessel. In order to better accommodate meetings, events, and dances during all seasons, Roessel constructed a hall at the northeast corner of the property in 1871. Known as the Union Capitol Hall, the building housed a first floor saloon and second floor event space.

The popularity of Union Park declined in the 1880s and it had ceased to operate by 1889. In that year, Elizabeth and Roger Hayne as well as Dr. Edward Saunders arranged to lease the old Russell/Allen house (which had recently been assigned the address 917 Russell) and operate it as a home “...for aged women who were no longer able to support themselves, and for the helpless little ones, rescued from lives of neglect and suffering.” Thus was founded Bethesda Charities, which today is known as Bethesda Health Group. The building was damaged by the 1896 tornado and eventually abandoned before being demolished in 1921.

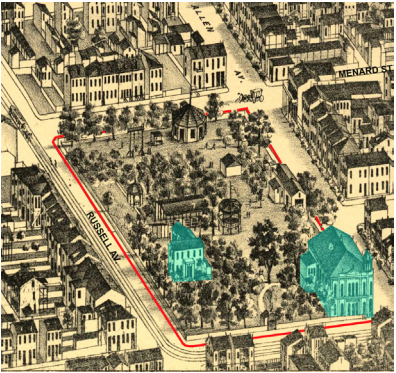
While Union Park had run its course, the building constructed as the Union Capitol Hall continued to be operated as a saloon until being



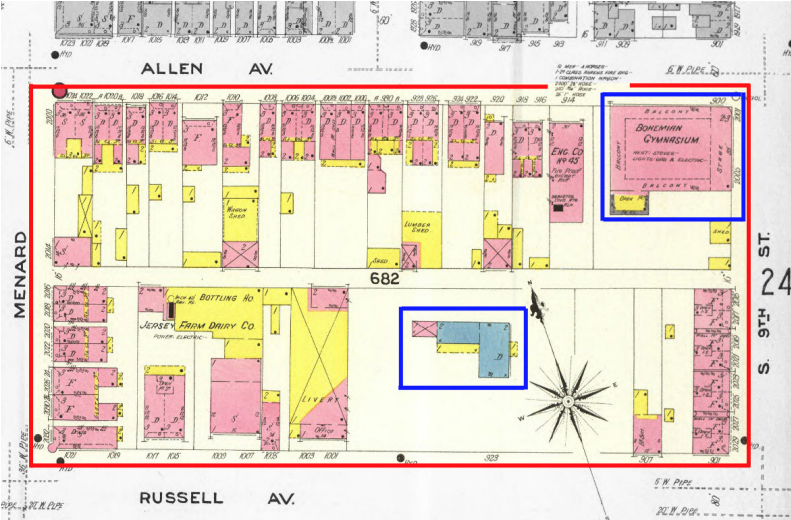
Union Capitol Hall today: the “Smile Lofts” at 2001 S. 9th Street.

sold to the Bohemian Gymnastic Association to be used as a turnverein in 1894. Also damaged by the 1896 tornado, the building was repaired with the removal of a cupola above its rounded corner entry, and the addition of an upper attic story and flat roof. It’s a testament to the accuracy of the Pictorial St. Louis map that one can clearly see the fenestration pattern of six round arched windows and a rounded corner entry, which match up perfectly with the surviving building’s first and second floors on the 9th Street elevation.

In the late 1920s, William F. Cox moved the Orange Smile Syrup Company into the building and shortly thereafter installed brightly colored tile advertisements for the company’s “Cheer Up Soda” and “Orange Smile Drink” on either side of its entrance at the corner of 9th and Allen. While people commonly know this building as the “Smile Building” it in fact is the sole remaining building from the Union Park Pleasure Resort, which occupied the grounds of Crystal Spring Farm.



Union Park 1875, showing Russell/Allen home and Union Capitol Hall.



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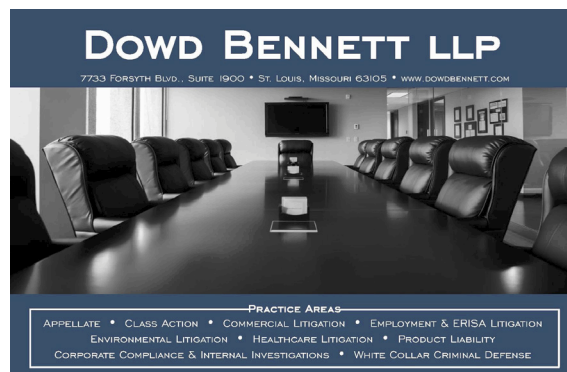
THIS PAST OCTOBER, Landmarks Association honored Mary Strauss and the legacy of her husband Leon with the H. Meade Summers Jr. Award for their enormous contributions to historic preservation in St. Louis. We'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mary one more time and to thank our wonderful hosts and high level sponsors for their support.

Thanks to Dr. Shahrdad Khodamoradi and Mr. Richard Green for generously hosting us at their lovely home at 3505 Longfellow in Compton Heights.

We would also like to thank the Vino Gallery, Brick River Cider and Urban Eats whose contributions ensured our guests went neither hungry nor thirsty. We would like to acknowledge a major gift given by the H. Meade Summers Jr. Foundation in honor of our award recipients and recognize our Capital, Pillar, and Foundation level sponsors. Thank you to everyone who made this event a wonderful success!

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