



Photos courtesy 88 Gifts Shop, Candelas Guitars, El Aguila Bakery, Gardena Cinema, and Sika.

Time and Tradition: Preserving L.A.'s Legacy Businesses

By Carley Michelle Hildebrand and Lisett Chavarela

Congratulations to the first recipients of the L.A. Conservancy's Legacy Business Grant! After receiving an overwhelming number of applicants from all across L.A. County, the Conservancy is delighted to share the results:

- 88 Gifts Shop (1987), L.A.'s Chinatown
- Candelas Guitars (1947), Boyle Heights
- El Aguila Bakery (1973), El Sereno
- Gardena Cinema (1976), City of Gardena
- SIKa (established in 1992), Leimert Park

These five locally-owned businesses boast a combined age of more than 200 years in operation in their neighborhoods and communities.

When we first announced the grant program in November of 2022, it was the culmination of years-long advocacy to help safeguard legacy businesses throughout Los Angeles County. We saved the 1953 McDonald's in Downey from demolition in the '90s, brought funding for the rehabilitation of the Formosa Cafe's Pacific Electric Red Car, and rallied to designate Norms on La Cienega, Tom Bergin's on Fairfax, and Otomisan Japanese Restaurant in Boyle Heights as Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCM).

In late 2019, we launched a legacy business initiative to raise awareness and support for these essential community anchors in L.A. County. In addition, we expanded our legacy business initiative to include a grant program thanks to Wells Fargo. This program provides \$5,000 grants to ten (10) eligible small businesses that have operated and contributed to their community's history and/or identity for at least 20 years and have less than 25 full-time employees.

Round two of legacy business grants closed on March 8th: be sure your email is current as we announce the second round of recipients! Turn to page 6 to meet the round one winners and follow us on social media as we spotlight them in the coming weeks and months: [@laconservancy](https://www.instagram.com/laconservancy).

Thank You for 45 Years of Support!

Dear Members:

March 2023 marks the 45th anniversary of the Los Angeles Conservancy's founding! Thank you for sharing in our journey to protect and preserve the historic buildings and places that tell the stories of Los Angeles.

What began as a group of concerned citizens uniting to save downtown's Central Library from demolition is now the largest membership-based local historic preservation organization in the nation. You make our work possible.

Over the years, the Conservancy has played a central role in countless preservation issues across the county. And while the endings haven't always been happy, with such losses as the Ambassador Hotel and, more recently, the Lytton Savings Building, the Conservancy remains your boots on the ground, working every day to protect historic places that matter.

We've also led the charge with educational programming, including our award winning walking tours, as well as student programs, panels and lectures, publications, and of course, our ever-popular *Last Remaining Seats* series.

From helping protect historic garden apartments, to investing in our local legacy businesses, to bringing you inside L.A.'s majestic movie palaces, it could not be accomplished without members like you.

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The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.



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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

Upcoming Tours & Events

For more information and to register for our events, visit: laconservancy.org/events.

**March 29
12 Noon**

PEOPLE + PLACES: THE ART OF PRESERVATION

This FREE, virtual panel discussion will bring together artists who use diverse mediums to tell rich, place-based stories. Learn from *City of Ghosts* creator Elizabeth Ito, documentarian Maya Santos, and comic artist Sam Nakahira about how storytelling practices can connect people to historic places and inspire their preservation.

**April 19
6:00 PM**

A WOMAN'S PLACE: VIRTUAL TOUR

On this special virtual tour, you'll explore the history of Union Station and Chinatown through the stories of women. Learn about Arcola Philpott, the first African American and the first woman to be hired by the Los Angeles Railway, Yiu Hai Seto Quon, one of the founders of Chinatown, and many others. Tickets: \$8 Members / \$12 General

**April 23 & 30
Starts at 9:00 AM**

ALL ROADS LEAD TO WESTWOOD: LITTLE HOLMBY

Little Holmby in Westwood is extraordinary for its collection of residential architecture and early Los Angeles history. On this guided tour, you'll see stunning exteriors designed by master architects, learn about Holmby-Westwood's relationship to nearby Westwood Village and UCLA, and discover what's happening today in this bucolic neighborhood. Tickets: \$20 Members / \$25 General

Save the Date: A Self-Guided Driving Tour of Iranian Heritage and History



Photo via On The Grid

The Los Angeles Conservancy has a new self-guided driving tour coming your way, and this time it will explore Iranian history and culture in Los Angeles. The tour, launching on **Saturday, May 20, 2023**, will highlight the diversity of Iranian traditions, religions, and ethnicities by examining major pockets of the Iranian community across Los Angeles. Neighborhoods covered include: **Tehrangelos** (Westwood), **West Pico Boulevard** (Pico-Robertson), **Downtown Jewelry District** (Historic Core), **Glendale**, and **San Fernando**.

Folks who purchase the tour will receive a digital booklet, including a map of significant sites, along with a playlist of Iranian music to listen to as they drive to different neighborhoods. Also included are recorded clips of interviews and stories told by community members. Tourgoers will also have access to events they can participate in alongside visiting tour sites: panel discussions, lectures, or even the opportunity to sample cuisine from a local restaurant!

Subscribe to the L.A. Conservancy's E-News for all the latest details on this fascinating and timely new tour. laconservancy.org/subscribe.

The Heritage Project is Here!



Students at Grand Central Market as part of a historic downtown tour. Photo by Carley Michelle Hildebrand.

Applications for the Conservancy's newest program for high school students in L.A. County open March 24th!

The Heritage Project introduces students, grades 9-12, to fascinating places and people important to L.A. history, and the tools they can use to preserve their stories into the future!

Over three weeks and numerous field trips to historic places and workshops, students will learn about those who discovered, embodied, and preserved California's natural and cultural resources—gaining a deeper understanding of what heritage means and what it takes to protect it.

Students will hear under-told stories from various communities and learn skills to research historic events and figures, including their own personal history. They'll walk away with a greater appreciation for local, historic, and natural spaces, and why preserving them matters.

The Conservancy is thrilled to partner with organizations and community members across the county to introduce students to significant sites in Los Angeles, including LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Tongva heritage sites, Chinatown, Will Rogers State Historic Park, California African American Museum, and even Catalina Island!

The Heritage Project takes place July 10-29, 2023 and is open to students who will be in grades 9-12 in the 2023-24 school year. It will be comprised of a small cohort of 15 students. To qualify, students need to be in or entering an accredited high school in L.A. County for fall 2023. There is *no cost* to participate and students will receive a stipend for expenses.

Applications for The Heritage Project open March 24th and will be due on May 5, 2023. The Heritage Project is made possible thanks to the generous support of Libby Motika and Curtis & Jill Scheetz.

If there's a high schooler in your life that you think would be interested in participating, please help spread the word! *Remember: students are the future of historic preservation.* Interested persons should review full eligibility rules and details on the Conservancy website at: laconservancy.org/heritageproject.

Good Luck, Michelle Vazquez!

We recently said farewell to our wonderful communications assistant, Michelle Vazquez! Michelle was a bright light in the communications department and was a joy to work with. She joined us in the fall of 2021 and was a constant presence at Conservancy events and key to the Conservancy's popular social media presence. She leaves to join another L.A. County nonprofit, The Children's Institute, as their new communications specialist. Good luck, Michelle!

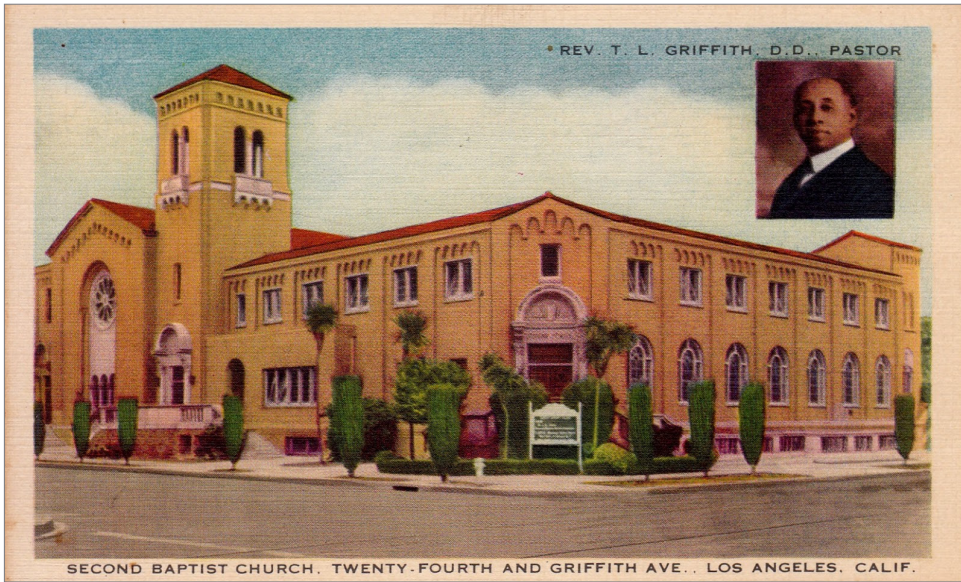
The communications department now has an immediate opening for a communications assistant. This is an exciting, full-time opportunity to join a dynamic team that helps advance the Conservancy's mission and vision. To learn more about this role, and other employment opportunities with the L.A. Conservancy, please visit our website: laconservancy.org/employment.

Call for Volunteer LRS Committee Members

It's hard to believe, but *Last Remaining Seats* is just around the corner and we're gearing up for the return of our beloved classic film series in June! The event takes us back to the L.A. Conservancy's roots, highlighting the exquisite historic movie palaces of downtown Broadway.

If you are interested in lending a hand to build a photo station set, have a great idea for a social media campaign, or love to write about classic movies, *we want you on our team!*

This committee plays an intrinsic role in the design of the series and is one of the most active volunteer groups at the Conservancy. It meets the second and last Tuesday of each month at 7 PM on Zoom leading up to the film series in June. If you are interested in learning more about joining the committee, please email the Conservancy's volun-



Vintage postcard of the Second Baptist Church in the Central Avenue Corridor. It was designed by Paul R. Williams in 1927. Photo is from the Teresa Rogers and the Model Horse History Project.

Supporting SoCal's Sacred Places

By Lindsay Mulcahy

Older sacred places across Los Angeles County are getting a boost this year thanks to two national organizations: Partners for Sacred Places and The National Trust for Historic Preservation.

New Dollars/New Partners for California Sacred Places

We're pleased to announce the Conservancy's partnership with the California Preservation Foundation to bring Partners for Sacred Places' training program, New Dollars/New Partners, to congregations in Southern California.

Partners for Sacred Places is a national nonprofit serving congregations of all faith traditions with older and historic buildings. They bring together a nationwide network of experts who understand the architectural value of places of worship and their significance to the community.

Over six months, the New Dollars/New Partners program will support important congregations in making a case for their historic buildings and expanding how they can serve their community. Training sessions will give congregations the tools they need to better articulate their value and raise funds to preserve their buildings. It also offers a space for communities of different faiths and regions to connect and learn from one another.

The inaugural Southern California cohort kicked off their training in January over Zoom. The congregations reflect the diversity of Los Angeles and the innumerable ways sacred places serve their community. Seven churches are participating with all but one inside L.A. County:

First United Methodist Church (Pasadena); First Universalist Parish of Pasadena, DBA Throop Church; La Mesa First United Methodist Church (San Diego); Macedonia Baptist Church (Watts); Second Baptist Church (Los Angeles) Temple Mishkon Tephilo (Venice); and Wayfarers Chapel (Rancho Palos Verdes.)

Members of Second Baptist Church, the second oldest Black church in Los Angeles, joined the program to continue building on the church's 100-year legacy of social justice and civil rights activism in South Los Angeles.

Leaders at Temple Mishkon Tephilo want to celebrate their Modernist temple, the oldest operating synagogue on Los Angeles' westside. South in Rancho Palos Verdes, members of the spectacular Wayfarer's Chapel are eager to learn new ways to sustain their iconic glass and redwood church. In Pasadena, the Throop Unitarian Universalist church has joined the program to explore new ways to connect with different generations.

In the coming months, we'll share more about these historic places of worship as they tell their stories and find creative ways to use their buildings to support community needs.

Preserving Black Churches

In February, the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced \$4 million in grants to 35 Black churches nationwide.

Representing Los Angeles in this list is the Congregational Church of Christian Fellowship (CCFF). Originally built as the Armenian Gethsemane Congregational Church, CCFF has been a pillar of the West Adams/Harvard Heights community since 1945, with a strong history of social justice, musical traditions, and community building. The grant will support the repair of the church's prominent, but leaning, steeple.



The Congregational Church of Christian Fellowship. Photo © Sihonn Dixon

Preservation Snapshots

Photos by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy



SAVED: Hung Sa Dahn / Korean Academy and the Paul Revere Williams House!

The Conservancy is happy to share two big wins for historic preservation: **Hung Sa Dahn/Korean Academy** and **The Paul Revere Williams House**, both in the Exposition Park area of L.A., have been saved from threatened demolition!

On Tuesday, February 28, the Los Angeles City Council designated Hung Sa Dahn/Young Korean Academy as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)! This comes after the Government of the Republic of Korea finalized a deal to purchase the Hung Sa Dahn/Young Korean Academy in the Expo Park neighborhood, saving it from demolition. A plan to preserve the property and share the site's role in the Korean independence movement will be developed.

In 2021, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHiP) and the Los Angeles Conservancy worked together to nominate Hung Sa Dahn as an L.A. City Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). Without this action, it is unlikely this structure would still be standing today.

Also in February, the threatened and severely deteriorating Paul Revere Williams House in the Exposition Park area gained new, preservation-friendly owners! Curt Bouton and architect John Arnold, AIA, plan to fully rehabilitate the house and honor the Williams family story. Arnold's firm, KFA Architecture, will help with the project.

This simple Craftsman-style house illustrates an important part of Paul Revere Williams and his family's life and story, and a larger African American experience of racial covenants and redlining that is rarely told or fully understood.

Without the Conservancy's effort to intervene in 2021, which led to the house's designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM), it otherwise would very likely have been demolished. Many thanks to Teresa Grimes, who helped us prepare the HCM nomination! And a big thank you to Curt and John for coming to the rescue and taking this project on. We look forward to watching the progress and celebrating once it's finished!

Ensure your email is up-to-date for the Conservancy's Action Alerts so you can keep up on urgent preservation issues, learn how to help, and hear great news like the new beginnings for the Paul Revere Williams House and Hung Sa Dahn!



Photo © LAC+USC Medical Center

Request for Proposals: Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center- General Hospital

The County of L.A. has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the reuse of the iconic Art Deco main building and portions (12 acres overall) of the West Campus!

The site of numerous significant events in the history of public health, the Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center contains one of the city's most recognizable Art Deco buildings. Constructed between 1927 and 1933, against the backdrop of the Great Depression, the twenty-story concrete building reflects New Deal ideals of scale, centralized organization, and beauty, in an efficient form.

Since the mid-'90s, the General Hospital Building has been mostly empty on the upper floors. With leadership from L.A. County Supervisor Hilda Solis' office, the County is looking for equity partners and a master developer to adaptively reuse the structure.

In addition to other uses, the RFP anticipates housing as a primary use, requiring a minimum of 600 housing units with at least 25% set aside as affordable housing.

Proposals are due June 2, 2023.

Visit our website for a link to the RFP, plus full background on the history of the building: laconservancy.org.

LEGACY continued from page 1



88 GIFTS SHOP

311 Ord Street Los Angeles, CA 90031

For over 30 years, the original location of 88 Gifts Shop was in BC Plaza on Broadway. In 2020, owner Annie Ma was forced to relocate her business to its present location. Ma's shop sells housewares, plants, and a variety of Lunar New Year gifts to neighborhood residents and tourists. Notably, 88 Gifts Shop sells Chinese-language newspapers, keeping local elders in touch with news event both here and abroad.



CANDELAS GUITARS

2724 E Cesar Chavez Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90033

Brothers Porfirio and Candelario Delgado-Flores moved from Mexico to Los Angeles in 1947 and brought with them a burgeoning music business that specialized in custom guitar marking. The store's clientele includes famous artists like José Feliciano but it's also a source of community pride, giving back to Boyle Heights in many ways including the creation of a 501c(3) nonprofit that provides free music lessons to local youth.



EL AGUILA BAKERY

5028 Huntington Drive South, Los Angeles, CA 90032

El Aguila Bakery was established by Apolinar Casillas in 1973 and has been a beloved fixture in L.A.'s El Sereno community ever since. With a loyal, multi-generational clientele, El Aguila prides itself on its authentic Mexican sweet breads, cakes, tamales, and so much more! The bakery also supports the community by giving back to local institutions such as the city, schools, and places of worship.



GARDENA CINEMA

14948 Crenshaw Boulevard, Gardena, CA 90249

Gardena Cinema is a single-screen movie cinema built in 1946 and operated by the Kim family since 1976. It's the only such theatre located in Gardena and has provided affordable entertainment options for more than four generations. It's a place where families can enjoy a film together and have meaningful experiences: in addition to their unique film slate, Gardena Cinema also hosts cinema potlucks, popcorn happy hours, and more.



SIKA

4330 Degnan Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90008

Sika, an institution of Leimert Park Village, has been specializing in custom jewelry, African art, clothing, and other goods for 30 years. Sika, the store's owner, weathered a downturn in the economy in the 2000s. His resilience has commanded the love and respect of the community and, today, despite concerns about gentrification, Sika remains at the heart of the neighborhood as a cultural gathering place.

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: JULIET DRINKARD



Young Juliet Drinkard (center) in 1955 with her parents. Photo courtesy Juliet Drinkard.

Juliet Drinkard has always loved history. So much so that at the age of 16, she entered an essay-writing competition to highlight a significant African American in history. Drinkard, who was born and raised in Los Angeles, chose mathematician and surveyor Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) as her subject. She won the contest, and was crowned Queen of Los Angeles' "Miss Negro History Week" in 1969.

Then there's the tour she organized and scripted for a family reunion in 1986 large enough to fill two tour buses that caravanned through many of Los Angeles' historic areas, starting at Watts Towers, ending in Hollywood, and of course allowing for a shopping stop at Santee Alley.

Although she moved out for years-long stretches, today Juliet lives in the same huge house in South Los Angeles where she was raised. Her parents purchased the home, which she describes as "looking like a ship," in 1955.

Although living in the home can be bittersweet now that her folks are gone, she has special memories of eating family meals looking out of the picture windows at her father's lush garden, which she says was "like being in a professional nursery."

With her passion for Los Angeles history, it was inevitable that Juliet would find her way to the Los Angeles Conservancy as a member and volunteer (her first assignment was the 2014 special tour We Heart Garden Apartments). She supports the organization "to make a difference in preserving Los Angeles' history." Two of her favorite historic locations in L.A. are Union Station and the Original Farmers Market, both formative places in her childhood that she still loves to visit.

Read more about Juliet's love of L.A. history at: laconservancy.tumblr.com.

DECEMBER 3 / FEBRUARY 1 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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