



# Preserve the Future by Addressing it Today

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In the early 1960s, as communities across the country started to move their focus away from downtowns and to the city's fringes, reconstruction plans for what was then known as the County Courthouse started to form here in Springfield.

In 1968, the reconstruction and rededication of Abraham Lincoln's capitol was complete. Tying in with all of the historic landmarks around Springfield, the Old State Capitol offers tourists and locals a deep dive into its beautiful and tangible history.

Forty years later, this preservation mindset remained strong in Springfield. Working with Bob Gray, president of Citizens Club of Springfield, Justin Blandford, site superintendent of the Old State Capitol, and other interested individuals, a 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the rededication was held at the Old State Capitol in 2008. Using minimal leftover dollars from the celebration, we established a field of interest fund at the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln to help grow a permanent resource to support local preservation efforts.



*Paul O'Shea*

In the decade since it was established, I am proud to share that the CFLL Historic Preservation Fund has given a boost to historic landmarks and local treasures all across the city of Springfield. Thank you to all of the fund's committee members for helping further this cause.

Preservation efforts have been made to the exterior of the Vachel Lindsay Home, stabilizing the floor of the First Black Firehouse on East Adams, and reproducing 1850s wallpaper at Edwards Place, which was discovered during recent restoration of the Lincoln-era home. The addition of handicapped accessibility was made to the Strawbridge Shepherd House. And design concepts for the reconstruction of Jackson Street Corridor were funded through the Historic Preservation grant, which also led to the development of the Illinois Realtors Bicentennial Plaza

With the CFLL Historic Preservation Fund, it's been rewarding to see the progress that's been made in such a short amount of time, all within the area of historic preservation.

That's part of the beauty of a field of interest fund. Its flexibility allows to help an entire issue area and can handle new and emerging hurdles.

A field of interest fund focuses philanthropy on a specific area of concern by granting to that issue area – forever. Whether your passion is the arts, early childhood education, senior citizens, or in the case of the CFLH Historic Preservation Fund, improving the historic treasures here in Springfield, there is consistent and permanent funding for that area.

The Community Foundation helps ensure that consistency and focus. It has been a rewarding experience to be able to work with the Community Foundation to develop a strategy of giving that is benefitting the entire community and speaks directly to a cause I care so much about.

As the years go on, the Community Foundation will maintain the legacy of the fund to ensure that needs in each field of interest are reliably met. The CFLH Historic Preservation Fund is a great example of how a field of interest fund can work and elevate the needs of a specific focus in our community.

In Springfield, it's easy to see the value of long-term sustainability with the numerous 19<sup>th</sup>-century homes and landmarks across the city. These nearly 200-year old buildings provide tremendous value and will continue to require nurturing for decades to come.

There's a saying that often comes up when hindsight becomes crystal clear, and it's something that was at the forefront of my mind and others who organized the Old State Capitol 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its reconstruction. "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."

Let's continue to preserve the future by addressing it today.

*Paul O'Shea is a licensed architect who has spent decades volunteering for causes dedicated to city beautification, including serving as the founding grant committee chair of the CFLH Historic Preservation Fund at the Community Foundation.*

*The CFLH Historic Preservation Fund is currently accepting grant proposals up to \$7,500 for projects that support the physical improvement of structures and/or promote the issue of historic preservation in Springfield, Illinois. The deadline to apply is August 5, 2019. To learn more, visit [CFLH.org](http://CFLH.org) or call the Community Foundation at 217.789.4431.*