

Alumni Newsletter

Issue 65
Sept. 2025

TOURING SEATTLE AND TACOMA, WASHINGTON: THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA SPRING STUDY TOUR, MAY 20–24, 2025

**By Lori Thursby (Newport '98; London '23), VSA Alumni Association Board Member, Alumni
Association Newsletter Editor**

Twenty-five people from the U.S. and Canada gathered in Seattle, Washington, for five days of fun, learning, and camaraderie while exploring the Emerald City. Many, many thanks to the tour organizer, Karen Bergenthal of Tours D'Art, and the exceptional tour leaders, Larry Kreisman and Dennis Andersen. (Dennis is also a Director on the VSA Board.) They were welcoming and knowledgeable, and their personal contacts opened the doors to many of the buildings we visited, including several that are not usually open to the public.

The tour group enjoyed the Opening Reception at the Henry H. Dearborn House (1907), an American Foursquare with Classical embellishments located in Seattle's First Hill neighborhood. On our way to the reception, we stopped at the Italian Renaissance-style Sorrento Hotel (1909) to see its Fireside Lounge, with mahogany panels and large fireplace adorned with a Rookwood glazed-tile surround, and at the Hofius House (1902), which includes a unique, Venetian Gothic portico on the façade.



*Hofius House façade with Venetian Gothic portico.
Photo by Lori Thursby*

After arriving at the H. H. Dearborn House, group members explored its interior and learned how this once single-family residence was rehabilitated and converted into professional offices in the mid-20th century. Currently it is the home of Historic Seattle, an organization established by the City of Seattle in 1973 to protect, preserve, and advocate for the city's architectural heritage. Group members then mingled over drinks and hors d'oeuvres until it was time for the keynote lecture by Jeffery Ochsner, who is a professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Washington. Jeffery provided us

with an introduction to Seattle architecture and the important events and periods of development in the city's history, from the indigenous Native American tribes who first inhabited the lands that now comprise the Pacific Northwest; to the devastation of the Great Seattle Fire of 1889 and the city's redevelopment and astounding growth in the three subsequent decades; and to its expansion in the last few decades into a major metropolitan area.

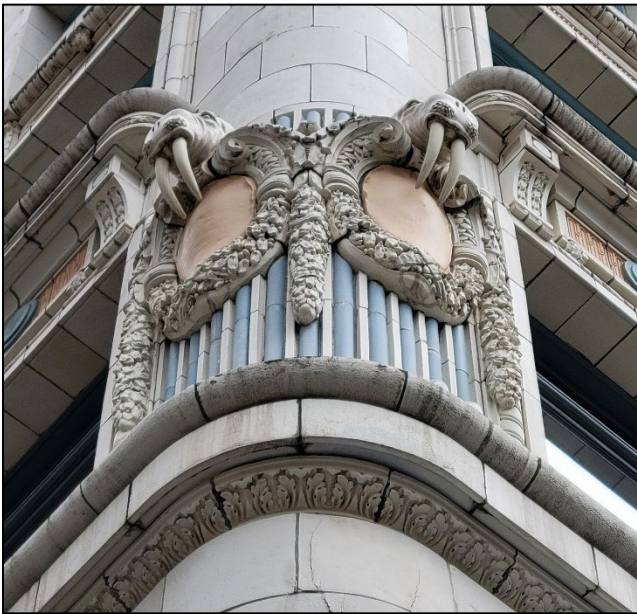
On our first full day of the study tour, Larry and Dennis led the group on walking tours of notable historic districts in downtown Seattle, seeing firsthand some of the achievements of city leaders and preservationists in preserving the late-19th- and early-20th-century residential and commercial buildings and architectural landmarks in these districts. In the morning, we walked the Pioneer Square Historic District and the city's early Beaux Arts skyscraper district. Pioneer Square was Seattle's first neighborhood, established in 1852, 17 years before Seattle was incorporated. Rebuilt after the 1889 fire, the heart of Pioneer Square showcases red-brick Romanesque Revival buildings, such as the Pioneer Building (1889–91), and other masonry Late Victorian edifices, including the Cadillac Hotel (1890), which comprises the Seattle Unit of the Klondike Gold Rush Historic Park. The group toured the historic park's visitor center (on the first floor of the building) and learned about Seattle's important role during the Gold Rush, as well as the significant challenges city preservationists faced in lobbying for the repair and restoration of the Cadillac Hotel,

which faced demolition after it was severely damaged by an earthquake in 2001.



***Downtown Seattle walking tour.
Photo by Liz Melanson***

Other highlights of our morning tour included: Union Station (1911), which no longer functions for rail but has been fully restored, including the barrel-vaulted waiting room; King Street Station (1906), which also has been restored and functions as the city's Amtrak station; the 42-story Smith Tower (1912), once the tallest building west of the Mississippi River; the Seattle Central Library (2004) designed by Rem Koolhaas; two men's clubs—Rainier Club (1904; 1929) and Arctic Club (1916; now the Arctic Club Hotel), which retains its opalescent glass Dome Room and terra-cotta walrus heads on the primary facades; and the Women's University Club (1922), where we were served a very satisfying lunch.



Detail of walrus heads on the Arctic Club façade.
Photo by Lori Thursby

After lunch, our walking tour continued in the downtown's financial and commercial district. Larry and Dennis explained the development history of the Metropolitan Center, a 10-acre downtown tract that includes the Cobb Building (1910), Olympic Hotel (1924), Skinner Building featuring the Fifth Avenue Theatre (1926), IBM Building (1964, by Minoru Yamasaki, a Seattle native who also designed the World Trade Center), and Rainer Tower (1977, also by Yamasaki). We also saw the amazing lobby of the Art Deco Seattle Tower (1928), and Benaroya Hall (1998), home of the Seattle Symphony, and the Garden of Remembrance, a state memorial that honors Washington State citizens who gave their lives in the service of our country since 1941. Our tour concluded at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM). Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown designed the SAM's original downtown building, which opened in 1991, and Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works Architecture designed a contemporary addition to the SAM, which was completed in 2007.



Fifth Avenue Theater.
Photo by Liz Melanson

The third day of the study tour was a day-long visit in Tacoma, located approximately 30 miles south of Seattle. Preservation professional and educator Michael Sullivan led our tour of Tacoma. Michael first guided us on a walking tour of the urban campus of the University of Washington Tacoma, which comprises the city's former warehouse district. The university rehabilitated the 19th-century warehouses and converted them into academic buildings, retaining the red-brick exterior walls, industrial-style windows, and other original character-defining features. For instance, Michael took the group into one of the classroom buildings where the original post and beam construction and wood plank floors are exposed within a full-height atrium. In addition, the tracks of the railroad line that ran parallel to the warehouses have been embedded in the sidewalks and railroad crossing lights are retained as campus landscape features.



***Interior of UW Tacoma academic building, a renovated 19th-century warehouse.
Photo by Liz Melanson***

Next, we boarded the coach and headed to the Theater and Old City Hall districts, where we saw several of Tacoma's late-19th and early-20th-century office buildings and its notable theaters, including the historic Pantages Theatre (1918), which the City of Tacoma restored in 2018; its elegant lobby and theatre were beautiful.

Our lunch was at McMenamins Pub, which is in what was formerly the Elks Temple (1915–16). In the afternoon, our tour of Tacoma continued by viewing the French chateau-inspired Stadium High School (one of the tour participants is an alumna of Stadium High!) and late-19th- and early-20th-century residential districts in North Tacoma. We stopped to see the First Presbyterian Church (1923–25), designed by Ralph Adams Cram. Near the end of the tour, we visited the Lodge

and the Pagoda, two historic buildings at Point Defiance Park, a 640-acre city park at the point of a peninsula in the Puget Sound. The Arts and Crafts-style Lodge was built in 1898 for the park Superintendent, and now serves as staff offices. An eclectic oriental-temple-style streetcar station was built contiguous to the park's Japanese Garden in 1914. Newspaper articles referred to the station's architecture as a Japanese "Pagoda" style. This characterization stuck, and thereafter, the building was called the Pagoda.



***Pantages Theatre interior.
Photo by Liz Melanson***

On Day 4 of the study tour, we were treated to tours of several magnificent historic landmarks in Seattle. First up was a visit to the Stimson-Green Mansion (1899–1901) in the First Hill neighborhood. The mansion, an eclectic mix of English Tudor, Gothic, and other period revival styles designed by

Spokane architect Kirtland Cutter, has been the home of the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation since 2001.



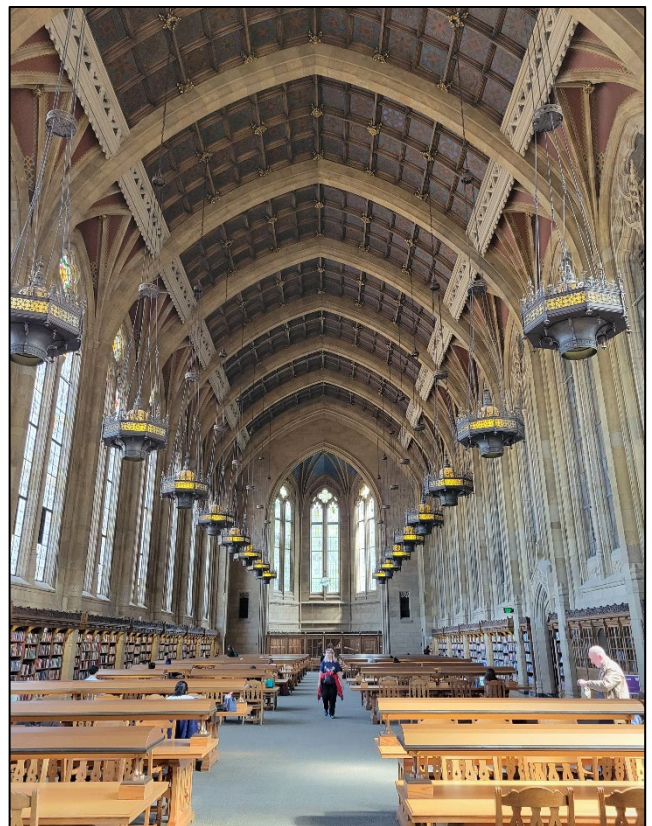
Stimson-Green Mansion.
Photo by Lori Thursby



Stimson-Green Mansion interior.
Photo by Lori Thursby

The group then boarded the coach and traveled north to the Collegiate Gothic campus of the University of Washington (UW). Our first stop was at the university's Burke Museum to marvel at the wonderful Louis Comfort Tiffany stained-glass window *Peacock with Hollyhocks and Morning Glories*. This 16-foot-tall window was originally installed in the Leary Mansion, located in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood. The group then took a short walk on a portion

of the UW campus, with Larry and Dennis providing us insights into the campus plan and architecture. Our walk culminated at the Suzzallo Library, an imposing Collegiate Gothic building constructed in 1923 by Seattle architects Carl F. Gould, Sr. and Charles H. Bebb, who also designed the 1915 campus plan. The heart of the Suzzallo Library is the Reading Room, a 52-foot-wide and 250-foot-long space lined with oak bookcases and Gothic-style windows that rises 65 feet high and is topped by a vaulted ceiling. We capped our visit to the university in the Special Collections Division, where we viewed selected architectural drawings of several of the buildings we had seen during the study tour.



Interior of Suzzallo Library, University of Washington.
Photo by Lori Thursby

The group then dined on a seafood lunch at Ivar's Salmon House, which is a cedar replica of a Northwest native longhouse. Following lunch, we boarded the coach for a driving tour of Lake Washington neighborhoods, along one of the largest extant park and boulevard systems in the country designed by the Olmsted Brothers. Larry arranged a visit to the Arts and Crafts bungalow of one of his fellow members of a local group of Arts and Crafts enthusiasts. He has filled his bungalow home of 17 years with Arts and Crafts furniture and decorative arts (and Japanese prints), including a Rookwood tile fireplace surround and Roycroft Renaissance ceramic pottery. We all admired his lovely Arts and Crafts home.

The rest of the afternoon was spent exploring the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, located in the Chinatown-International District. Established in 1967, this museum focuses on the art, culture, and history of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. It is a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and the only pan-Asian Pacific American community-based museum in the country. It includes exhibits that are both moving and highly informative about the experiences of Asian Pacific community members living and working in Seattle. The day concluded with a delicious family-style Chinese banquet dinner at the Diamond Bay Restaurant.

The last day of the study tour began by returning to the First Hill neighborhood, where Dennis had arranged visits to the English country Gothic Trinity Episcopal Church and to the Spanish Renaissance-inspired St. James Cathedral. Afterwards, we embarked

on a driving tour of the North Capitol Hill neighborhood, which comprises a wide variety of period-revival residences from the early-20th century. Our first stop in North Capitol Hill was at Volunteer Park, one of the highlights of the Olmsted Brothers' 1903 park system design for Seattle. The centerpiece of Volunteer Park is the Art Deco-style Seattle Asian Art Museum. Designed by Carl Gould and completed in 1932, the museum became the home of the Seattle Art Museum's Asian art collections in 1991.



***Seattle Asian Art Museum.
Photo by Lori Thursby***

Our driving tour of North Capitol Hill continued with one final stop at the Loveless Studio Building (1930), named after its designer, Arthur L. Loveless. The Studio Building is actually a series of one-and-a-half-story Tudor Revival-style buildings built around a courtyard. It originally served as a place for Seattle artists to live and work. Our group had interior access to one of the building's original tenants, the Russian Samovar Restaurant, to see two sets of preserved murals by the muralist Vladimir Shkurkin. One block from the Loveless Studio Building is the Rainier Chapter of the DAR

Chapter House (1925), which Seattle architect Daniel Riggs Huntington designed as a replica of George Washington's Mount Vernon, and is the only purpose-built DAR Chapter meeting place in the country. Members of the Rainier Chapter provided us with a wonderful farewell lunch in their chapter house.

Information on future VSA Study Tours can be found at the [Study Tours and Symposia page](#) on the VSA website.



Mural by Vladimir Shkurkin in the Russian Samovar Restaurant. Photo by Lori Thursby

NEWS

John H. Waters (Newport '07, London '13 and '22), co-director of the Chicago Summer School from 2015–18, associate director from 2018–19, and guest lecturer thereafter, is featured in a recent *New York Times* article titled “[Want a House by Frank Lloyd Wright? There’s a Support Group for That.](#)” The article highlights the work of the [Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy](#), a Chicago-based non-profit organization that facilitates “the preservation and stewardship of [all] the remaining built works designed by Frank Lloyd Wright through advocacy, education and technical services” (FLW Building Conservancy 2025). The Conservancy estimates that there are approximately 240 privately owned, Wright-designed residences in the United States; for context, 500 of Wright’s more than 1,000 building designs over a seven-decade career were built.



*John H. Waters.
Photo from the Frank Lloyd Wright
Conservancy*

John, a licensed architect, is the conservancy’s preservation programs director. He advises owners on the preservation and maintenance of Wright’s buildings. Respectful repairs of a Wright building can be challenging, but through the Conservancy’s network of resources, John connects stewards to the period-appropriate materials and or specialists that they will need. Indeed, the *New York Times* article highlights the stories of four owners of Wright homes, located in different parts of the country, and how John and the team at the Conservancy worked with each owner to help them overcome the challenges they faced. Their challenges included finding a local contractor to repair rotary-cut redwood veneer in a custom house built in 1939 in Hillsborough, CA, which was damaged by a fire; finding an appropriate solution for waterproofing the leaky roof of a 1939 Usonian house in

Mettawa, IL; meeting the terms of a preservation easement that protects a 1940 Usonian house and property in Okemos, MI; and sourcing unique materials and recreating them as originally designed in a 1950s Usonian “Automatic”-style house in Detroit, MI. The article also describes two issues that all owners of Wright buildings face: how to discourage wildlife such as birds and skunks, from taking up residence and damaging the foundation, veneers, or other building features and materials; and how to obtain the appropriate home insurance coverage for the property, including Wright-designed furniture and other fittings. Check out the [article](#) for more information on all these issues and on John’s role at the Conservancy.

Sources:

Fixsen, Anna. “Want a House by Frank Lloyd Wright? There’s a Support Group for That.” *New York Times*, June 26, 2025.

Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy. “Our Mission, Vision, and Values.” <https://savewright.org/mission-vision/>, accessed July 11, 2025.

SEND IN YOUR NEWS!

We like to keep in touch with all our alumni and to share your news with fellow alumni. If you have news about your current position, academic studies, or research project; an upcoming publication, lecture, or organizational event; a recent award or recognition; or other related news items, please email it to Lori Thursby, the Alumni Newsletter editor, at vsaaalumninewsletter@gmail.com.

IN MEMORIAM

Architectural historian **Andrew Saint** (1946–2025; London '96) passed away on July 16th at the age of 78. Andrew began his career at the University of Essex as a lecturer. A few years later he served as the architectural editor of the Survey of London, a long-running, multivolume series that documents the urban and architectural history of the buildings in the whole of central London and its inner suburbs. After more than a decade in that position, Andrew then worked as an historian at English Heritage. In 1995, Andrew was appointed as a Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Cambridge, teaching architectural history. In 2006, he returned to the Survey of London as its general editor, publishing eight volumes before he retired in 2019. Andrew was a prolific writer, producing books and journal articles that studied various aspects of 19th and 20th century architecture, including the work of Richard Norman Shaw, the history of the architectural profession, the relationship between architecture and engineering, the development of Late Victorian London, and Britain's postwar school building program. He was also a major contributor to a series of books on Victorian architecture and design published by the Victorian Society UK. Besides being a distinguished architectural historian, Andrew was a friend and supporter of the London Summer School, and for many years delivered superb lectures on Arts and Crafts architecture to Summer School students.



Andrew Saint at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, England. Photo by Martin Pope, as published by The [London] Telegraph.



Claude Kent at Le Corbusier's cabin in the south of France. Image courtesy of Nancy Kent

Claude Kent passed away on August 28, 2025 in Los Angeles, California at the age of 79. He was born in Los Angeles and lived most of his life there. Claude was a dedicated visual artist. His work involved both painting and sculpture. After college he taught at Cal State Fullerton and then after about 10 years he resigned to work full time in his studio. His wife **Nancy Kent** (Newport '03, London '04) indicated that Claude worked in his studio right up to the end. She states: "As a young person [Claude] thought he might become an architect and that early interest never left him. His aesthetic was formed by his proximity to the 20th Century Case Study program. You can easily see that in his work." Nancy continued: "We spent our

life together seeking out wonderful buildings and art both at home and throughout the world. He loved to look at architecture but more than that he loved to work in his studio." Claude was a friend and supporter of the VSA, and knew many alumni through VSA events he and Nancy attended together.

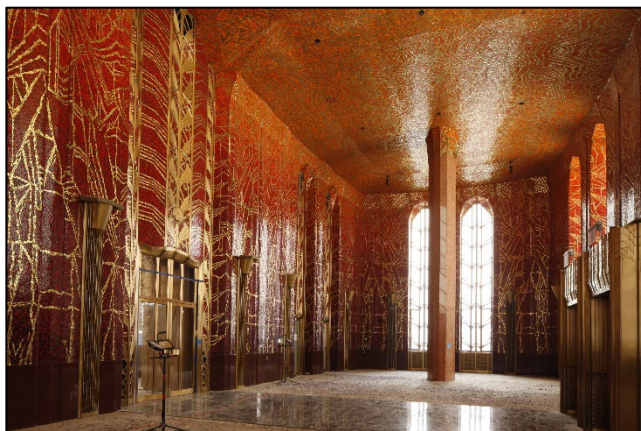


Wood and glass wall piece by Claude Kent, 1975. Image courtesy of Nancy Kent

HILDRETH MEIÈRE'S RED ROOM

**By Lori Thursby (Newport '98; London '23),
VSA Alumni Association Board Member,
Alumni Association Newsletter Editor**

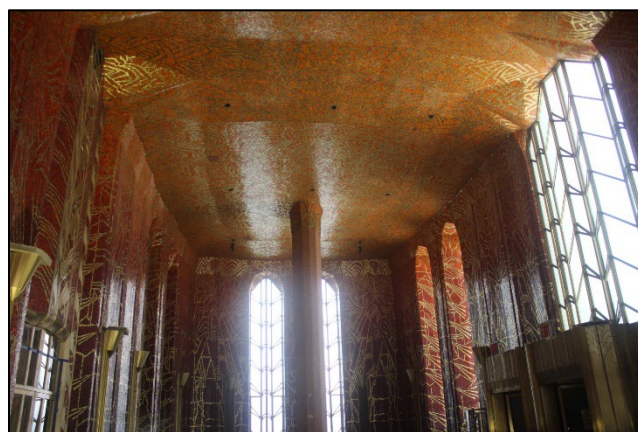
On March 21, 2025, the Art Deco-style 1 Wall Street Banking Room, commonly known as the “Red Room,” was reopened to the public as the new flagship store of Printemps, the French luxury retailer. Closed to the public for over two decades, the Red Room has been thoughtfully restored and its extraordinary design can be experienced once again.



***1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior.
Image courtesy of the NYC Landmarks Preservation
Commission***

Architect Ralph Walker, a principal of the firm Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, designed 1 Wall Street for the Irving Trust and Bank Company as its new headquarters. One Wall Street is one of the earliest Art Deco skyscrapers in New York City and itself a designated individual landmark. Walker hired renowned artist Hildreth Meière to develop a striking mosaic mural for the reception room and banking hall, which Walker designed with curved stone walls that mimic those of the building's facades. Meière covered the banking room's walls, columns, and ceiling in

glass mosaic tiles that fade from deep red to orange across the ceiling, and gilded tiles that create web-like designs that gleam on the red ombre background and draw one's gaze up to the 33-foot-high ceiling. Completed in 1931, the 1 Wall Street banking hall was unlike any other bank interior in New York City at the time.



***1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior.
Image courtesy of the NYC Landmarks Preservation
Commission***

Hildreth Meière (1892–1961) was a pioneering American muralist, and a trailblazer for women in the fields of design and architecture. A leading figure in Art Deco design, Meière was known for her willingness to explore new materials. She designed for and worked with a variety of mediums, including glazed ceramic tile, mixed metal and enamel, silver leaf, colored plaster, paint, stained glass, and marble and glass mosaic. Over her 40-year career, she completed more than 100 commissions with the leading architects of the day, including projects at Radio City Music Hall in New York City, the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., and the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln. Meière was the first woman appointed to the New York City Art Commission, and in 1956, was awarded the

Fine Arts Medal by the American Institute of Architects.



***1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior Detail.
Image courtesy of the NYC Landmarks Preservation
Commission***

The restoration of the Red Room was undertaken by Macklowe Properties, which purchased 1 Wall Street in 2014. In 2016, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) approved Macklowe Properties' plan to convert the landmark office building into more than 500 luxury condominiums and ground-floor retail, one of the largest office-to-residential conversion projects in the city. In advance of French

retailer Printemps taking over the former reception room and banking hall, Macklowe preserved and restored the "Red Room" which included using newly discovered surplus original tiles to restore the murals. On June 25, 2024, the LPC designated the 1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior as an interior landmark.

This fall, the International Hildreth Meière Association (IHMA) will host open houses in New York on October 17–19 and Chicago on October 18–19 to celebrate Hildreth Meière's legacy. Further information on the open houses is not available at this time, but if you will be in either city in mid-October, then save the dates and look for more info in local media sources for each respective city or contact the [IHMA](https://www.hildrethmeiere.org/).

Sources:

Downtown Alliance. "The History of the Dazzling Red Room at Printemps." April 8, 2025. <https://downtownny.com/news/printemps-red-room/>. Accessed July 21, 2025.

NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. "LPC Designates 1 Wall Street Banking Room as an Interior Landmark." Press Release, June 25, 2024. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/lpc/about/pr2024/lpc-designates-1-wall-street-banking-room-20240625.page>. Accessed July 18, 2025.

International Hildreth Meière Association (IHMA). "A Grand Opening with Art Deco Flair: Hildreth Meière & The "Red Room" at Printemps New York," March 21, 2025. <https://www.hildrethmeiere.org/blog/a-grand-opening-with-art-deco-flair-red-room-at-printemps-new-york>. Accessed July 21, 2025.

IHMA. "[Biography of] Hildreth Meière." <https://www.hildrethmeiere.org/bios/hildreth-meiere>. Accessed July 21, 2025.

MEMBERSHIP

Thanks to the generous support of its members, the Alumni Association of The Victorian Society Summer Schools contributed \$30,000 in Summer School scholarships in 2025 for appreciative and deserving students of architecture, decorative arts, design, and museum studies. Renew your membership and continue our partnership in sharing the appreciation and understanding of Victorian heritage and design with the new class of Summer School participants. Please help repeat the successful effort of this year with your membership contribution.

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Your membership is crucial to enable the Alumni Association to continue its scholarship support for future students. In fact, it is expected that scholarship demands will increase in the coming years. THANKYOU for your continued support.

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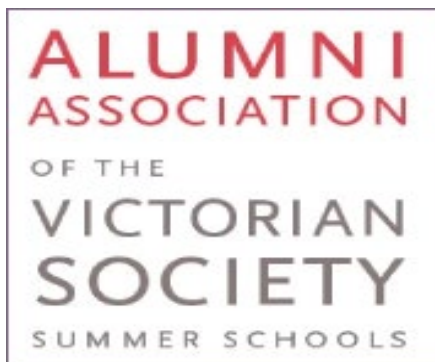
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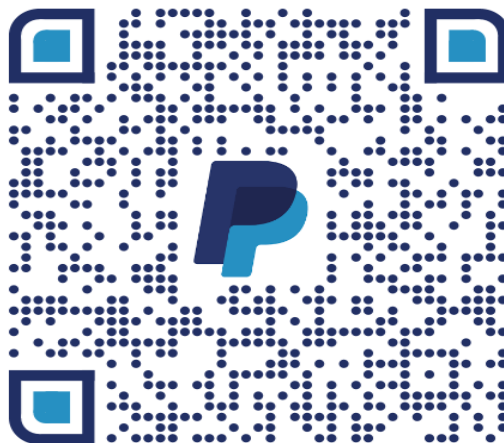
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¹ Contributions during the period October 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025. If you see any errors, please email Alumni Association President David Lamdin at dlamdin@gmail.com.

THE HERITAGE SOCIETY OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The **Heritage Society of the Alumni Association** supports our efforts to provide student scholarships for future Victorian Society Summer Schools. The Alumni Association is humbled to have an extraordinary group of supporters who feel so strongly about our primary mission to raise funds for student scholarships that they have generously included the Alumni Association in their estate planning. You are invited to join this special group of Alumni by making a planned gift such as a bequest in your will or beneficiary designations of IRAs or retirement plans.

Hank Dunlop has joined the Heritage Society of the Alumni Association with a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) designation from his IRA. **John C. Freed**, a longtime VSA and Alumni Association supporter, made provisions for a \$10,000 bequest to the Alumni Association in memory of his partner, **Paul Duchscherer**. **Paul Duchscherer** very thoughtfully made provisions in his trust for a \$10,000 bequest to the Alumni Association as well as designating the Alumni Association as the beneficiary of all future royalties from his many books and other publications. The **Bob and Carole Chapman Fund** very generously awarded a grant of \$10,000 to the Alumni Association Chapter in memory of **Carole Chapman**. These gifts and designations help ensure that current and future generations of students will be able to attend the educational opportunities presented by the VSA Summer Schools.

You can join these members of the **Heritage Society of the Alumni Association** and support the mission of the Alumni Association while maximizing the benefits of a deferred gift. Your gift becomes part of your estate planning to protect valuable assets from income, capital gains, and/or estate taxes.

Requests by Will or Living Trust

This common estate planning technique allows you to retain control of your assets during your lifetime and avoid estate taxes. GIFTS OF LIFE INSURANCE, CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES, CHARITABLE LEAD TRUSTS, CHARITABLE REMAINDER ANNUITY TRUSTS, CHARITABLE REMAINDER UNITRUSTS, and a POOLED INCOME FUND are some of the other estate planning techniques you can discuss with your financial advisor to provide funds to the Alumni Association to provide scholarships to future Summer School students.

To include the **Alumni Association** in your will or trust, the following is suggested wording to take to your attorney: "After fulfilling other provisions, I give, devise and bequeath _____% of the residue and remainder of my estate (or \$_____ if a specific amount) to the **Alumni Association** of the Victorian Society Summer Schools, a 501(c)(3) organization **to benefit the Alumni Association** (tax ID # 23-1710978), located at 24 Wilkins Ave Fl 1, Haddonfield, NJ 08033.

It is crucial that the **Alumni Association** be identified as your gift will, otherwise it will go to the national VSA organization with whom we share EIN **23-1710978**.

Please let us know about your estate plans if you decide to join the Heritage Society of the Alumni Association by contacting David Lamdin at dalamdin@gmail.com.