

Resolution



ORDER NO: 2021-0994

DATE: October 5, 2021

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF DALLAS §

Virginia Savage McAlester

BE IT REMEMBERED, at a regular meeting of the Commissioners Court of Dallas County, Texas, held on the 5th day of October, 2021, on a motion made by Dr. Theresa M. Daniel, Commissioner of District 1, and seconded by John Wiley Price, Commissioner of District 3, the following Resolution was adopted:

WHEREAS, Virginia Savage McAlester created a legacy that will have a lasting impression on all who knew her – family, friends, and the many Dallas County residents who have benefited from all her efforts. Virginia was a trailblazer in architectural history and preservation and was the author or co-author of five books on the subject. Her best-known work is *A Field Guide to American Houses* which was named one of 1984's ten most outstanding reference books by the American Library Association and received an honor award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The book earned her the moniker as the “Queen of Historic Preservation”; and

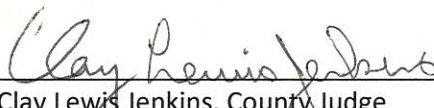
WHEREAS, She is remembered for her fearless dedication, determination and courage. Virginia will always be associated in Dallas with her pioneering fight to preserve Swiss Avenue's historic homes. Because of her efforts, the area became Dallas' first historic district in 1973. She also served as founding member of Preservation Dallas; chaired a revolving fund for Munger Place to help revitalize the neighborhood; worked to create Fannie Mae's first inner-city lending program; and founded Friends of Fair Park, a group that has helped raise almost \$200 million for restoration of Fair Park and gained it National Historic Landmark status; and

WHEREAS, Virginia was born on May 13, 1943, the daughter of Wallace and Dorothy Savage. Her father was an attorney and politician who served as mayor of Dallas from 1949 to 1951. Her mother was a preservationist in her own right, buying up abandoned properties on Swiss Avenue, where the family lived, to protect them from being razed. Virginia received her B.A. from Harvard University, and she completed the first year curriculum of the Harvard Graduate School of Design; and


WHEREAS, As Peter Simek wrote in D Magazine, “... for McAlester, the push for historic preservation was a response to a recognition that a city's greatness is made up of all the small details—the overlooked architectural features, the odd juxtaposition of forms and styles—that make neighborhoods unique. It was a recognition that homes do more than shelter us, they reflect and inform who we are.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dallas County Commissioners Court does hereby celebrate the life of Virginia Savage McAlester who will long be remembered for her trailblazing spirit, passion for preservation, fearlessness in the face of opposition and her long-lasting impact on Dallas County residents.

DONE IN OPEN COURT, this the 5th day of October, 2021


Clay Lewis Jenkins, County Judge


Dr. Theresa M. Daniel, District 1


J.J. Koch, District 2


John Wiley Price, District 3


Dr. Elba Garcia, District 4