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## To the editor

Your Fall 1995-Winter 1996 issue provides an excellent overview of public housing in Houston and the United States. I do quarrel with the characterization of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's policies as "slash and burn" in Jacqueline Leavitt's article, "Reassessing Priorities: 60 Years of U.S. Public Housing."

I am enclosing a copy of HUD's latest "reinvention" document, *Renewing America's Communities From the Group Up*. The public housing section describes our efforts to stabilize public housing across the nation. Over the past three years, much has been done to transform HUD in all areas — internal and external.

It is my hope that the policy and program changes outlined in the enclosed document can serve as the basis for bipartisan legislation. I would like to see a renewal of our core values: demanding personal responsibility, rewarding hard work, promoting self-sufficiency, harnessing the forces of the free market, and expanding individual opportunity.

A return to these values means changing incentives so people are encouraged to work, cracking down harder on gangs and drug dealers, evicting irresponsible tenants, suing corrupt owners, and seizing mismanaged public housing authorities. Essentially, we hope to create a framework of supports, incentives, and rules so people and community leaders can help lift themselves beyond government assistance.

I was moved by what I read in *Cite* to push harder for action at HUD. Keep up the great work!

Henry G. Cisneros  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development

After reading Curtis Lang's "A Depleted Legacy: Public Housing in Houston" and Brad Tyer's "Update: Allen Parkway Village" in *Cite* 33 (Fall 1995-Winter 1996), we were compelled to respond on behalf of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston. Your article would lead one to believe that HACH has done nothing well in over 57 years of existence. It is true that our agency, not unlike many other large companies, has had its share of problems with administrations and some of its administrators

in the past. However, when they were identified and clearly substantiated, decisive actions were taken by the board of commissioners or the mayor to remedy the problems.

To once again drub HACH over mistakes made and corrected is a vain attempt by these writers to imply these same conditions *might* still exist. In spite of our previous setbacks, we are very proud of the accomplishments we have made in improving the quality of life for the thousands of families we have served over the past 57 years. It is interesting to note that with all of the "investigative" effort put forth by your reporters to dredge up negative aspects of our history, they failed to include other facts which clearly indicate the major positive strides we have made to upgrade and improve our operating efficiency and effectiveness.

Facts such as: since 1991, HACH has been awarded \$4,440,000 to be used for operating a Crime and Drug Elimination Grant program. This program has been extremely successful in providing positive alternatives to drugs and criminal activity for our families and youths. The programs have helped dramatically reduce the incidence of crime in all of our developments. In August 1991 the Office of the Inspector General began a 22-month audit that resulted in five findings. By June 1995 every one of the findings was remedied and certified as "closed" by the Office of the Inspector General.

Our agency's performance is measured by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development annually under the Public Housing Management Assessment Program (PHMAP). Annually since 1991, our performance score has steadily improved and currently is at 80.72 percent on a scale of 100.

Another fact not well documented is that HACH, in spite of the Allen Parkway Village issue, has successfully managed and modernized virtually all of the remaining properties and currently has modernization programs under way. Cuney Homes, Wilmington House, the Ewing Apartments, Clayton Homes, Oxford Place, and the Bellerive highrise for the elderly have all undergone substantial rehabilitation resulting in revitalized communities, while Allen Parkway Village sits practically vacant.

It was briefly noted that Allen Parkway represents approximately one-fourth of our public housing stock. It is extremely difficult to make progress toward rehabilitation and revitalization of Allen Parkway Village when years of legal battles, attempts at mediation, and even personal audiences with the secretary of Housing and Urban Development have failed to persuade Lenwood Johnson and his staunch supporters to reach a mutually satisfactory compromise. The prevailing attitude of Mr. Johnson and his supporters of "all or nothing or else we'll litigate the matter" serves no useful purpose other than to keep people homeless.

Any learned historian will agree that

history is documented to serve as a guide to future generations and should help prevent us from committing the same mistakes our forefathers made. The history of constructing monstrous public housing developments has been a terrible failure and enormous waste of taxpayer dollars. Smaller, well-designed, low-population-density developments, however, have shown just the opposite to be true. Residents' self-esteem, sense of belonging to a larger neighborhood, and upward mobility opportunities markedly improve.

The last golden opportunity to revitalize and rehabilitate Allen Parkway Village may soon disappear. Unless we are able to proceed with the Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD) Grant, which promises to bring over \$36 million to Allen Parkway Village, Congress can and will rescind these funds. The URD plans, currently being developed with opportunities for input from all of the Allen Parkway Village residents, other HACH public housing residents, and residents from the surrounding community as well, will make available drastically needed affordable housing for eligible citizens of Houston.

One need not be a Rhodes Scholar to see that the future of public housing is very precarious at this time in our history. HACH fully intends to diligently work on insuring that our public housing stock will be maintained for the future years as funds diminish.

Joy Fitzgerald  
Executive Director,  
Housing Authority of the City  
of Houston



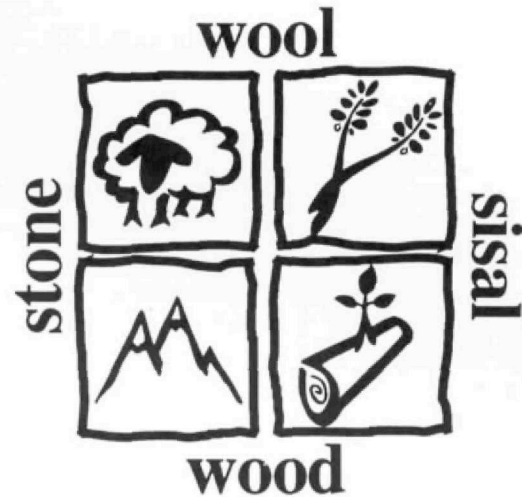
With this issue of *Cite*, Barrie Scardino (left) assumes the position of managing editor. She is co-author of *Houston's Forgotten Heritage* (Rice University Press, 1991) and past president of both the Rice Design Alliance and the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance. Former managing editor Ann Walton Sieber (right) will remain on the *Cite* editorial committee.

*Cite* layouts by Minor Design Group's Craig Minor and Cheryl Brzezinski-Beckett are featured in *Working With Computer Type* by Rob Carter (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1995), pp. 120-23. *Cite* was also nominated in 1995 for the Chrysler Corporation's prestigious Innovation in Design Award.



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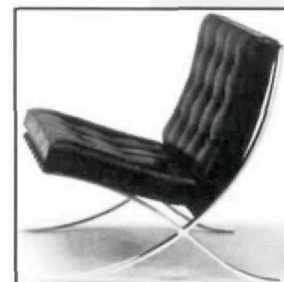
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# RDA Gala Honors Stanley Marcus for His High Style

The ninth annual Rice Design Alliance fundraising gala, *High Style*, was held at the Neiman Marcus Galleria store on Sunday, 5 November 1995. The benefit, chaired by Phoebe and Bobby Tudor, drew 600 RDA supporters, who gathered to recognize legendary retailer Stanley Marcus. The party extended across three levels of the Neiman Marcus store — cocktails at the garden level, silent auction on the main level, and seated dinner by Truffles & Flourishes on the second floor. Guests danced to the music of the Michael Carney Orchestra until midnight.

As one of the most significant patrons of architecture and design in Texas during the 20th century, Stanley Marcus was recognized by RDA for his long commitment to architectural excellence in both his personal and his commercial life. By recommending William Lescaze to design the Magnolia Lounge for the 1945 Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas, Marcus introduced modernist architecture to Texas. His decisions to retain Eleanor Le Maire to design the Neiman Marcus store interiors for 30 years and to employ architects to design his stores were of enormous consequence to retail design and architecture throughout the nation. When Neiman Marcus began its suburban expansion he sought out talented architects to design the stores: Roscoe De Witt, Edward Larrabee Barnes, Kevin Roche, and Gyo Obata. "The variety of architecture that the stores embodied was tremendously beneficial to the whole spirit of Neiman Marcus in fighting the trend toward standardization in both architecture and merchandising, in thought and everything else," Marcus acknowledged.

Marcus was presented with the RDA Award for Design Excellence by honorary gala chairs Barbara and Gerald D. Hines. Gerald Hines has been a personal friend as well as a business associate of Marcus for more than 30 years. Underwriting co-chairs Sally Avery, Ellen Simmons, and Isabel Wilson were responsible for proceeds of nearly \$200,000, which will help fund RDA educational programs and *Cite* magazine.

RDA would like to thank Neiman Marcus Galleria manager Gayle Dvorak and public relations director Lynda Doty for their support and cooperation; Judy Kugle and co-chair Sarah Balinskas for the unique silent auction;

Louis DeLaura for enhancing the store's stunning environment; Deborah Brochstein for designing the handsome invitations; Paul Hester for photography; Stephanie Milligan for coordinating the invitation mailing; and Rice University architecture student Matt Seltzer for organizing student volunteers. RDA also thanks all the gala volunteers who helped make the evening possible, as well as the following generous contributors.

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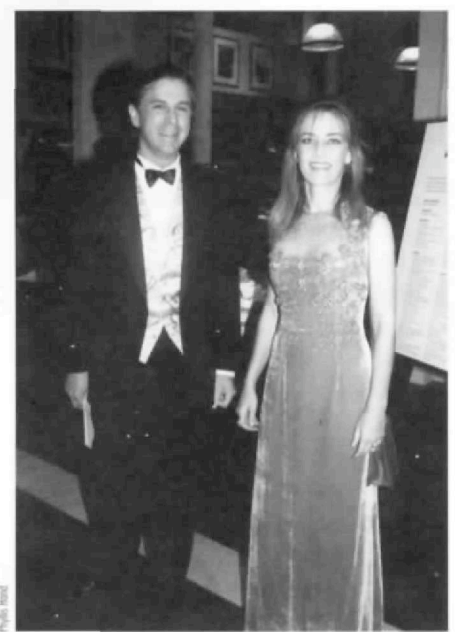
(left to right) Gerald and Barbara Hines, Stanley Marcus, and Phoebe and Bobby Tudor.



Gala decorations by Elizabeth Byrd.

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RDA president Charles Maynard and his wife, Michelle.

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## 1995 Silent Auction Donors

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# RDA Spring Architecture Events

Hilary Harnischfeger and Jory Alexander  
Harris Gallery  
Dan Hassebroek  
Heng-Hui Tiffany Lee  
Hotel Crescent Court  
The Houston Architecture Foundation  
The Houston Ballet Foundation  
The Houston Center Club  
The Houston Museum of Natural Science  
The Houston Symphony  
The Houston Yacht Club  
The Hyatt Regency Houston  
Interface Carpet  
George O. Jackson  
Jerry Jeanmard  
Burdette Keeland  
Kinko's  
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The Knoll Group  
Judy Kugle and Jim Saunders  
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Looking at Art  
Bud Luther  
J. M. Lynne, The Wallcovering Company  
The Mansion on Turtle Creek  
Maxim's Restaurant  
Mitchell Energy & Development Corp.  
Moody Gardens  
Christopher R. Moore, Artist  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
Steve Neel  
Emily Ballew Neff and Alison de Lima Greene  
Neiman Marcus  
Melissa E. Noble  
Omnitek Kitchen Designs  
The Orange Show  
Ouisie's Table  
Park Place Motor Cars  
Judy Pesek and Ron Skipper  
Prestige Wine Cellars  
The Rice University Press  
The Rice University School of Continuing Studies  
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Danny Samuels  
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The Society for the Performing Arts  
Southwest Airlines  
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Surroundings  
Sweetwater Country Club  
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Theatre Under the Stars  
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Truffles & Flourishes Catering  
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## RDA 1996 Annual Gala

Saturday, November 9,  
7:30 p.m. until midnight

Join us for an evening of dinner, dancing, and a silent auction at the annual RDA fundraising event. The 1996 RDA Award for Design Excellence will be presented to Raymond Brochstein, one of the nation's leading manufacturers of custom woodwork and furniture. Brochstein has demonstrated a deep commitment to making Houston a better and more beautiful place to live through his involvement and generous support of many civic efforts. The gala will take place in the newly renovated Houston Industries Plaza, 1111 Louisiana, where the architectural millwork of Brochsteins Inc. is featured in the lobby.

## Symposium

### The City as a Cultural Place

31 January

Held in collaboration with the Contemporary Arts Museum and the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County, this program examined how each element of the city, from the utilitarian sewage treatment plant to the dignified museum building, contributes to our cultural and visual experience.

## Spring Lecture Series

### Making It

A series of five lectures focusing on the art and technology of building things. Speakers included historians of technology, practicing engineers, and the builder of one of Louis Kahn's most elegant structures.

**6 March – Tom F. Peters**, director of the Building and Architectural Technology Institute at Lehigh University

**13 March – Guy Nordenson and Mahadev Raman**, structural engineer and mechanical engineer with Ove Arup & Partners, New York

**20 March – A. T. Seymour III, P.E., C.C.I.**, construction manager of the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth

**27 March – David Leatherbarrow**, author, with Mohsen Mostafavi, of *On Weathering*, and director of the Department of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania

**3 April – Henry Petroski**, professor of civil engineering at Duke University and author of *The Pencil, The Evolution of Useful Things*, and *To Engineer Is Human: The Role of Failure in Successful Design*

This series was supported by W. S. Bellows Construction Corporation; ccrd partners; Compaq Computer Corporation; Constructors & Associates, Inc.; Haynes Whaley Associates, Inc.; Houston Chapter, Associated General Contractors of America; Marek Brothers Systems; Matrix/Structural Engineers; Karen Rose Engineering & Surveying; Structural Consulting Company; Thomsen Company; the Corporate Members of the Rice Design Alliance; and the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County.

## Lecture

### Robert Irwin

8 April

Environmental artist Robert Irwin discussed works he has executed for public places.

## RDA Architecture Tour

### Loft Horizon

18 and 19 May

This year's tour featured lofts and other intriguing spaces around downtown Houston. Spaces that were on the tour:

- 808 Travis Street, Niels Esperson Building, cupola
- 214 Travis Street, W. L. Foley Dry Goods Building, two living spaces
- 1105 and 1109 East Freeway, photographer's studio and art preservation studio
- 2409 Commerce Street, living space and artists' studios
- 1701 Commerce Street, living spaces and artists' studios
- 3909 Main Street, Isabella Court, apartment and courtyard

The 1996 tour was made possible by Creative Flooring Resources, Treebeard's on Market Square, University of Houston–Downtown, Windham Builders, the Corporate Members of the Rice Design Alliance, and the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County.

## Competition

### On Your Mark

The Rice Design Alliance, the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance, the City of Houston Archeological and Historical Commission, and the City of Houston Department of Planning and Development cosponsored a design competition for a Houston Historical Marker that will reflect the history of Houston, educate the public, and be a symbol of Houston's heritage. The winners were announced the evening of June 6. An exhibition of selected entries will be on view at the Julia Ideson Building, Houston Public Library, during the month of June.

Jurors for the competition were Peter Brink, vice-president for programs, services, and information, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., and former director of the Galveston Historical Foundation; graphic designer Cheryl Brzezinski-Beckett of Minor Design Group, Houston, an associate professor at the University of Houston; interior designer and architect Vicki McIntosh, chief financial officer, Spencer Partnership Architects, Houston, and former president of the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance; Larry Speck, dean, School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin; and Bart Truxillo, chairman, Houston Archeological and Historical Commission, an architect and owner of historic properties in Houston.

## Winner, "On Your Mark"



Winner, "On Your Mark" design competition. Douglas/Gallagher of Houston. 2nd place: Herman Ellis Dyal, Steve Stamper, and Curtis Roberts of Fuller Dyal & Stamper, Austin. 3rd place: Donald A. Quaintance, Public Address Design, and William Hartman, Exterior Design Office, Houston. 4th place: Hill Swift, Houston. Honorable Mention: Franklin D. Lawyer, Houston.

## Fall 1996 Lecture Series

### American Dreams

Wednesdays, 25 September through 23 October. This series of lectures will examine American utopian concepts, past, present, and future, in order to reach a better understanding of why our future stands in such dark contrast to these visions and what may be shaping our next American dream. Speakers include Robert Fishman, Margaret Crawford, Donald Albrecht, and Bruce Webb. For tickets and information about these programs, please call the Rice Design Alliance, (713) 524-6297.

## Houston Dialogue

Fall 1996 and Spring 1997

The Rice Design Alliance, the Rice University School of Architecture, and the University of Houston College of Architecture will for the first time collaborate on a series of four lectures that will occur both in the fall and the spring. Speakers, dates, and location to be announced.

## Annual Membership Meeting

Sunday, June 9

Spend an afternoon in the country at artists James Surls' and Charmaine Locke's studio in Splendor, Texas. View the artists' works, enjoy music and country fare, and meet other RDA members. New RDA board members and officers will be installed at the business meeting. 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.