



LANDMARKS
ILLINOIS

The Relevancy Project

Preservation Pennsylvania Honor Awards

January 26, 2022

Bonnie McDonald, President & CEO



What is “relevance”?

- relation to the matter at hand;
- practical and especially socially applicable.

Something is relevant when it improves your life in some way - a solution to a problem.

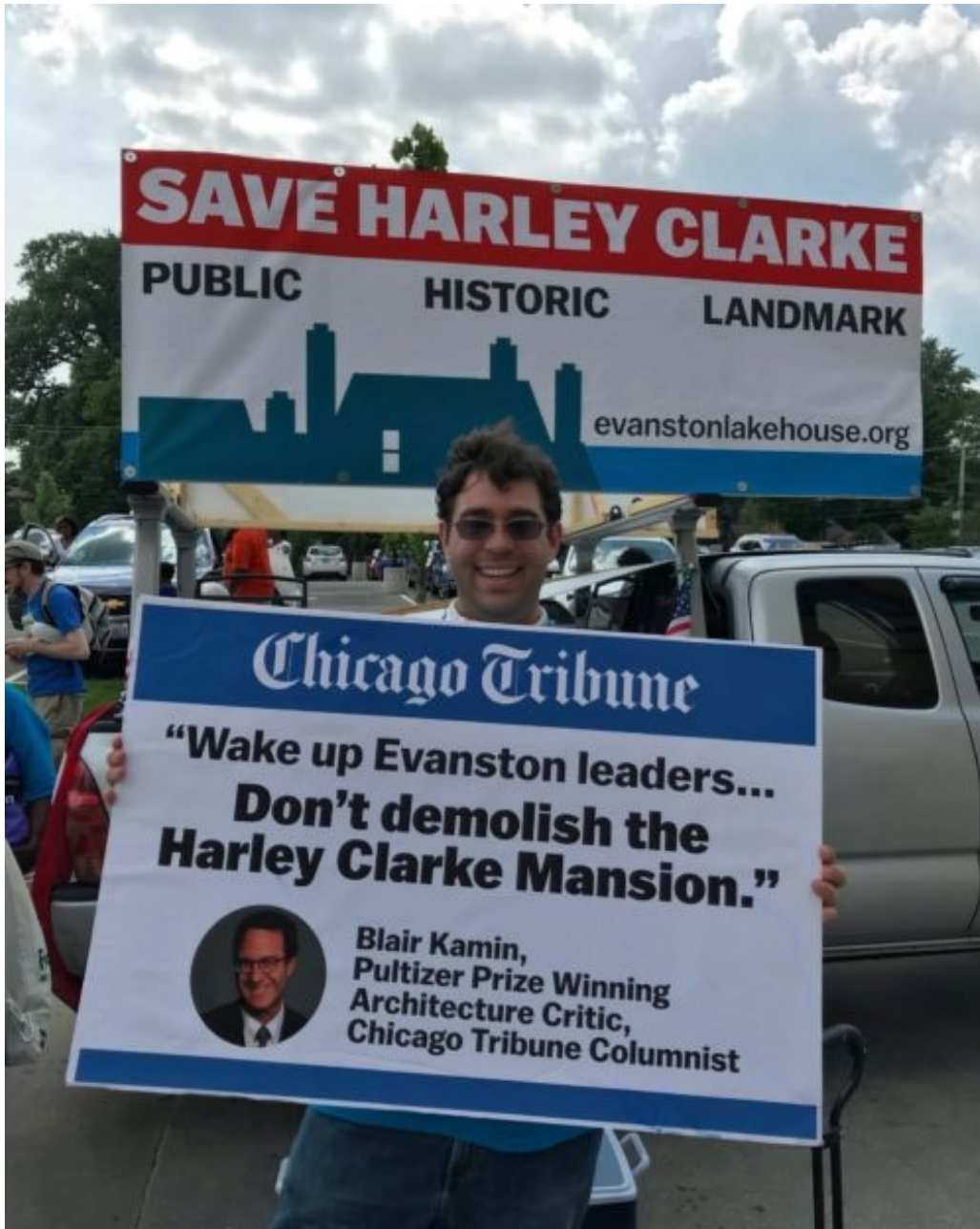


Harley Clarke Mansion, Evanston, IL

Source: Friends of Harley Clarke, <https://www.friendsofharleyclarke.org/exterior/f51vuhbgsgma2rv31do3t8rrsq9d3l>

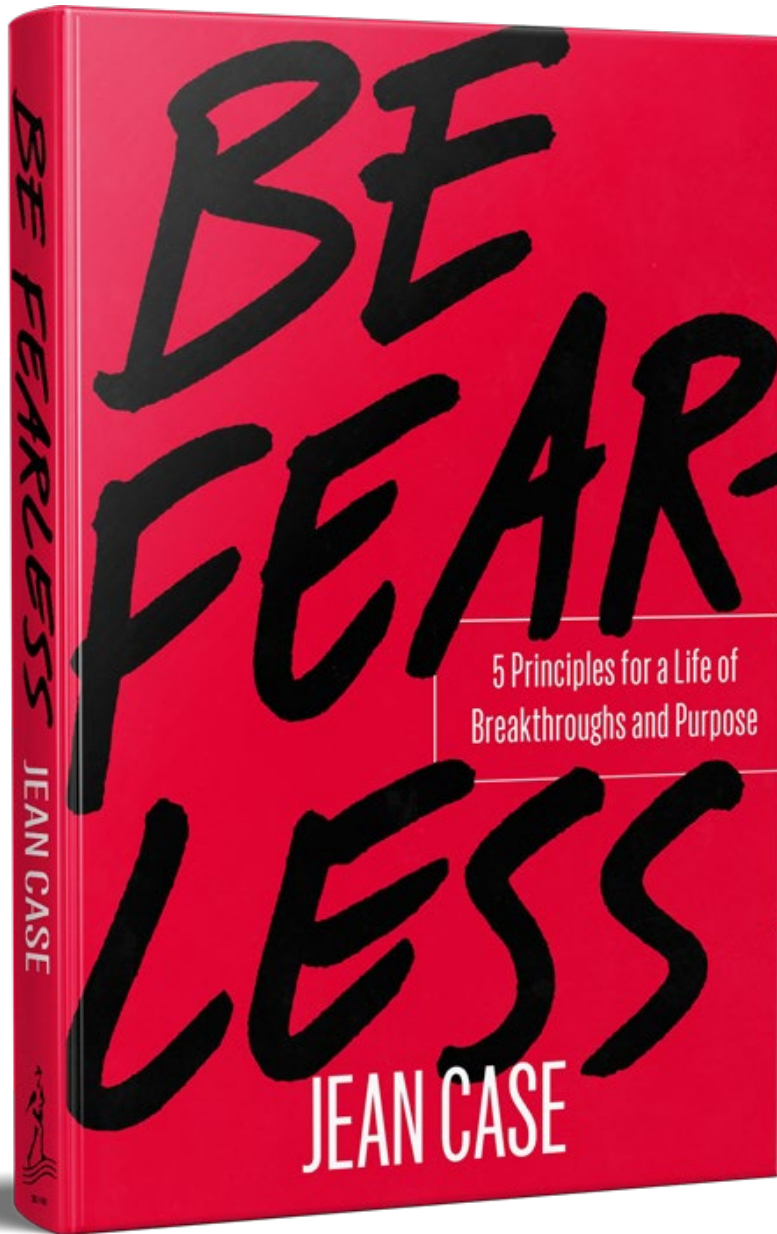
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Skyline Council of Landmarks Illinois
member Carl Klein advocating to save the
Harley Clarke Mansion, Evanston, IL
Source: Landmarks Illinois



Are you ready to
change the world?

Image Source: <https://casefoundation.org/program/be-fearless/>

**“The most effective way to do it
is to do it.”**

Amelia Earhart
Aviator

Research Sabbatical – August 2019



**Bonnie McDonald and
Fairleigh Jackson, New Orleans**
Source: Landmarks Illinois



Felicia Mayro, New York City
Source: Landmarks Illinois



Adrian Scott Fine, Los Angeles
Source: Landmarks Illinois



130 Interviews (2019-2021)

From top to bottom, left to right: Peg Breen; Zulmilena Then; Angelo Baca; Bryan Lee, Jr.; Eddie Torrez; Sarah Marsom; Michelle Magalong; Kate Kearney; Paul Edmondson; Alissa Shelton; Brent Leggs; Darryl Young. Source: Landmarks Illinois

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**“If you want to thrive in
a disrupted world,
you have to be incredibly adept
at not standing still.”**

Bob Iger
Former CEO
The Walt Disney Company

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Key Findings

1. Building an Inclusive / Accessible Movement
2. Equitable Preservation
3. Solving Critical Issues
4. Sustaining a Future for the Work

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Building an Inclusive / Accessible Movement

- Diversity will be our strength
- Who decides?
- Embrace what people find important in their communities
- How accessible and applicable are our resources and to whom?
- Language and communication



**Proposed Obama Presidential Center, Hyde Park / Woodlawn neighborhoods, Chicago, IL
Deemed an “adverse effect” on Jackson Park, listed on the National Register of Historic Places**

Photo source: ABC News, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/president-barack-obamas-library-chicagos-south-side-plans/story?id=77070524>

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Equitable Preservation

- Basic human needs must be met before preservation can be a priority
- Meet people where they are
- Access and self-determination
- Expand definitions of significance and integrity
- Our toolbox needs to adapt and expand
- We don't have a right to people's history
- Preservation's tie to unjust land use policies



**Inequity for Sale Project by social
justice artist Tonika Lewis Johnson
Englewood neighborhood, Chicago, IL**
Source: Tonika Lewis Johnson,
[https://www.tonijphotography.com/p
rojects/7164844](https://www.tonijphotography.com/projects/7164844)

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Solving Critical Issues

- Climate change
- Justice – environmental, racial, economic
 - Dismantle systemic racism and white supremacy
 - Income equality
- Housing availability, access and affordability
- Displacement and gentrification
- Depopulation in rural and urban communities and corresponding issues



**The Edith Farnsworth House, Plano, IL, subject to flooding of the adjacent Fox River
Landmarks Illinois holds a preservation easement on the house, a historic site of the
National Trust for Historic Preservation**

Source: Landmarks Illinois

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Sustaining a Future for the Work

- Education – for all ages
- We need people interested in, and trained to do, the work
- We need jobs for them
- Changing public policy
- Sustainable funding
 - Historic Preservation Fund
- Burnout – putting out fires all the time
- Succession planning

Next Steps

**Skyline Council of Landmarks Illinois
heart bombing of
Harley Clarke Mansion, Evanston, IL**
Source: Landmarks Illinois



What Can You Do?

The Relevancy Guidebook

1. Justice, Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
2. Climate Change and Climate Justice
3. Housing
4. Income Inequality
5. Storytelling
6. Regulations and Review
7. Incentives and Resources
8. Employment
9. Health / Public Safety / Livability / Resilience
10. Transparency and Accountability
11. Partnerships
12. Succession Planning
13. Miscellaneous

120 ideas and counting...

- Publish your organizational values and principles
People before buildings – or – people and buildings
- Build boards / staff that represent our communities
- Translate our information into the language(s) spoken by our stakeholders
- Evaluate your organization's procurement practices to ensure equity
- Put funders directly in touch with organizations doing the work

120 ideas and counting...

- Ensure young people have agency within organizations that they can self-select projects and drive their own agenda for the future
- Pay interns
- Provide further DEIA training and certification
- Support legislation allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that create density without demolition
- Join the Climate Heritage Network

#letsfixpreservation

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**“If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far,
go together.”**

African Proverb

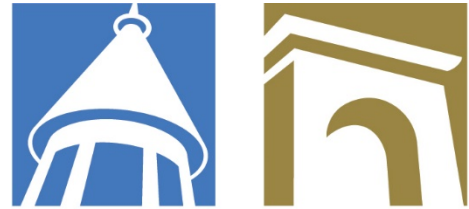
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