75+ reasons to celebrate the Landmark Society’s 75 years
1937 The Landmark Society is formed to save 1835 Campbell-Whittlesey House, donated by Helen Ellwanger, who purchased the house to save it from demolition.

1946 The partially restored Campbell-Whittlesey House is opened to public. Later, it is considered the finest Greek Revival restoration in America.


1952 Stages its first tour of historic houses, with focus on Geneseo.

1956 Buys and restores 1792 Stone-Tolan House, oldest building in Monroe County.

1957 Buys and restores Jonathan Child House, grand Greek Revival mansion of Rochester’s first mayor.

1958 Begins 30-year development of four-acre Stone-Tolan property with assistance from Allyn’s Creek Garden Club.

1962 The Landmark Society becomes a professional organization with first executive director, Billie Harrington, and paid staff. Retiring president is Elizabeth Holahan, who persuaded authorities to move Route 490 away from front porch of Campbell-Whittlesey House.

1964 Conducts first survey of a city neighborhood, the Third Ward, and prepares a report that persuades the city of Rochester to abandon plans to demolish a large portion of the neighborhood.


1965 Forms Genesee Landmarks Foundation to restore historic houses in Third Ward.

1968 Acquires and sells the *Edward E. Boynton House* designed by Frank Lloyd Wright with covenants. Buys furniture in 1977 to ensure it stays with house.

1969 Works with City to adopt a Preservation Code and establish East Avenue Preservation District.

1970 Releases second printing of 1949 C-W paint analysis book, this enlarged version with photographs. Careful scraping of paint to find original paint colors in Campbell-Whittlesey reveals 12 color tones in the parlor alone.

1970 Buys threatened Brewster-Burke House and restores it, making it Landmark Society headquarters.
1971 Starts first of 42 annual House and Garden Tours to increase public appreciation of historic architecture.

1972 Nominates 1888 Federal Building to National Register of Historic Places and persuades City to make it City Hall. The Rochester City Hall project was designed by Frank S. Grosso and received a design award from The American Institute of Architects. It preserved all the original details of this building while adding a new addition with contemporary elements.


1976 The original late nineteenth century Tolan barn was converted into a contemporary facility as an orientation center for tours and as a space for classes, lectures, community activities and exhibitions. This adaptive reuse of a century old barn was designed by architect Frank S. Grosso.


1980 Saves and restores the remains of fire-destroyed St. Joseph’s Church to create St. Joseph’s Park.


1981 Begins 4-year effort to nominate over 100 downtown Rochester buildings to the National Register of Historic Places.

1982 Acquires and restores 1867 Ellwanger Garden, opening it to the public. Garden especially notable for peony collection.

1983 Hires Susan Maney, first Landmark Society staff member with a degree in horticulture.

1983 Starts Built Environment Awareness Program to teach children about their cultural and architectural heritage. Program continues for two decades.

1984 Initiates annual Preservation Awards program to honor best preservation projects.

1984 Receives contract from City of Rochester for Multiple Resource Study of the Center City, first such study completed in the United States.

1985 Helps save Old Stone Warehouse, 1 Mount Hope Avenue, in last-minute rescue. Provides low-interest loan for rehabilitation.

1985 Launches major initiative of annual multiple-day bus tours to historic destinations. First tour four days in the Adirondacks.

1985 After 14 years of House and Garden Tours in the Third Ward, decides to plan future tours in various city neighborhoods. First such tour celebrates historic Mount Hope Avenue.

1986 Stages first annual Preservation Conference, serving The Landmark Society’s nine county region and beyond.

1987 Accepts ownership of *Roycroft Inn* in East Aurora and supervises its complex restoration.

1987 The Landmark Society celebrates 50th anniversary with “Landmarks of the Week” column for 52 weeks in Rochester Times-Union.

1987-1989 With New York State Council on the Arts grant, surveys rural historic resources in Wyoming County, first such inventory conducted.

1988 Co-produces with Greater Rochester Cablevision a series of six television programs on “Rochester Architectural Showplace”.

1988 Completes year-long effort to save and restore historic Holy Redeemer Catholic Church (*now Northside Church of Christ*) in Rochester.

1988 Receives grant to study historic landscapes of Monroe County.

1990 Purchases derelict *Hoyst-Potter House* and after restoration makes it Landmark Society headquarters.

1990 Wins Preservation League of New York State award for overall achievement.


1990 Launches $2 million capital campaign, called “Bringing Landmarks to Life”, second fundraising campaign in its history.
1991 Introduces “Landmark Preserves” in purple raspberry, black raspberry, and concord grape flavors produced by Arbor Hill Grapery, Naples. Berries picked and processed on same day.

1991 Launches annual Landmark Society Antique Show with 60 dealers at Stone-Tolan estate, a 15-year event through 2005.

1992 Introduces annual “Dining for Landmarks” fundraiser with trustees and others opening their historic homes for lavish dinners.

1992 Organizes Dr. Anthony L. Jordan Historic Sites Committee to recognize black contributions to Rochester’s heritage, with daughter Katherine Jordan heading committee.


1993 20th anniversary of Stone-Tolan Country Fair.

1994 Launches “Ghost Walk”, created by staff member Cindy Boyer, with dramatic sketches staged on historic porches in East Avenue Preservation District.


1996 Creates “Walk the Walk” Encounters with Rochester’s African-American Ancestors”, which becomes annual event in February, Black History Month.


1998 Creates Home Room Program to promote city living.

1998 Participates in formation of the Susan B. Anthony Collaborative, an affiliation of organizations and entities dedicated to revitalization and improvement of the Susan B. Anthony neighborhood.

1999 Issues Landmarks in Music CD, Songs of the Erie Canal by The Dady Brothers and Friends.

1999 Publishes catalog of products promoting western New York architecture and cultural heritage. First catalog had 26 items; 2001 catalog, 80 items in Rochester and Buffalo.
1999 Begins training real estate agents with two-day-long class “How to Market Historic Houses Successfully” and launches HomeWork column in City Newspaper. Both now in second successful decade.


2000 Board passes resolution to “take all reasonable steps to protect and preserve Seneca Park.” Opposes Monroe County plans to turn the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park into a huge parking lot for the zoo.

2001 Begins inventory of significant historic sites along western portion of Erie Canal for New York State Heritage Corridor Planning Commission and assists in the formation of the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor.

2001 Publishes Rochester Routes, written by Patricia Braus and offering tours of historic places in 17 Monroe County cities, towns, and villages.

2002 Sues County of Monroe to stop zoo expansion in Seneca Park.

2003 Lists the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Seneca Park in the National Register of Historic Places and prepares a Multiple Property Documentation Form for the Rochester Municipal Park System that streamlines National Register listing for additional Rochester parks.

2003 Loses first court battle on zoo expansion, but eventually saves Seneca Park from becoming a parking lot through Landmark Society and public outrage at the stand of county officials.

2004 Builds a Victorian Playhouse designed by architect and president Jim Yarrington and planned and coordinated by trustee Jerry Ludwig and his wife, Sarah Rockwell, with their “Martinis” team. Sold through a raffle, Playhouse project becomes major fundraiser (5000 tickets sold).

2004 Stages first of annual Inside Downtown tours to promote city living, mostly in adapted historic buildings.

2004 Sends first annual fall candidate questionnaire gauging candidates’ positions on preservation and redevelopment issues.

2005 Wins prestigious New York State Historic Preservation Award from New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation for “outstanding commitment to safeguarding western New York’s rich heritage.”

2005 Executive director Henry McCartney leaves The Landmark Society after 22 years of building the organization to premier preservation status. He doubled membership and made countless contributions to historic preservation.


2005 Forms the Olmsted Task Force (today the Olmsted Subcommittee) in order to develop a positive, proactive approach to recognizing and preserving Frederick Law Olmsted’s legacy in Rochester’s parks.

2006 Plays a key role in a statewide coalition representing preservation, business, municipal, and environmental groups that successfully advocates for legislation establishing the NYS Historic Tax Credit programs.

2006 Establishes Advocacy Task Force to reach political candidates, developers, government officials, and media to support historic preservation.


2007 Celebrates 140th anniversary of the Ellwanger Garden.

2007 Obtains grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the Susan B. Anthony Neighborhood Preservation Initiative, which funded a preservation workshop for neighborhood residents and the completion of 10 repair and maintenance reports completed by preservation architect, John Bero.

2006 In cooperation with the City of Rochester and Monroe County, secures $90,000 in grants from the federal Preserve America program and the Rochester Area Community Foundation to establish a coordinated signage program for Rochester’s Olmsted-designed parks.
2008 Uses the proceeds from the sale of vacant houses in the Susan B. Anthony neighborhood to provide grants to eleven neighborhood residents for small home improvement projects.

2008 Receives grant from the Preservation League of New York State to fund a historic resources survey of “recent past” resources (1940-1975) within Rochester’s Inner Loop.

2008 Posts first blog to award-winning Landmark Society blog, Confessions of a Preservationist.

2008 Hosts first Preservation Boards/Commissions Workshops, which provide free training and networking opportunities in the spring and fall to members of area preservation commissions.

2009 In collaboration with Bayer Landscape Architecture, LLC and the Cultural Landscape Foundation, prepares A Survey of Rochester’s Historic Parklands for the City of Rochester.

2010 Launches RochesterCityLiving.com, which promotes city living and neighborhoods and provides a searchable database of houses for sale in the city. RochesterCityLiving.com becomes the new, virtual version of the Home Room program that resided at Landmark Society offices.

2010 Publishes the 600th HomeWork column in City Newspaper. The column is a cooperative effort of City Newspaper and The Landmark Society’s Rochester City Living program.

2011 Holds 25th annual Preservation Conference in the village of Dansville, Livingston County. The Conference welcomes speakers from around the region as well as a nationally renowned expert on preservation, sustainability, and historic windows—architect Walter Sedovic, FAIA, LEED.

2011 Participates in National Preservation Conference taking place in Buffalo by bringing a bus full of participants from around the country to Rochester to experience the city’s neighborhoods and preservation successes.

2012 Celebrates 75 years of outstanding historic preservation activities, now with new executive director, Wayne Goodman.
Be part of the next 75 years!

Visit www.landmarksociety.org to find out more

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