

**Mayor's Award for Historic Preservation**  
**Pat Fishback**  
**"Mary McClure Bibby Lifetime Achievement Award"**



The inaugural Brookings Historic Preservation Commission "Mary McClure Bibby Lifetime Achievement Award" is presented to Pat Fishback for her lifelong dedication to and her accomplishments in historic preservation. This award recognizes those who, through personal effort and involvement in historic preservation, have made significant contributions to preserving Brookings' heritage.

"Pat Fishback's name is synonymous with historic preservation in Brookings. Pat has championed historic preservation through planning, public policy, education, and advocacy. Pat is an advocate, a practitioner, a political ally, a mentor and a force in historic preservation," said Mayor Keith W. Corbett.

Fishback served on the Brookings Historic Preservation Commission from 1994 to 2003 and as its chair for six years. During her tenure, Pat worked on or led the effort on numerous policy, advocacy, and educational endeavors that helped preserve, promote, and develop the historical resources of our city and shape our heritage.

During her tenure, one of Pat's key projects was to identify Brookings' historic resources to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Nation's official list of historic places worthy

of preservation. This resulted in the creation of the University Residential Historic District with 248 homes, the Sexauer Seed District's 10 buildings, and Central District expansion to include the Central Elementary and the former Brookings High School/Middle School.

As chair, she organized Town Hall meetings in 1997 and 1998 to identify the community's highest priorities for historic preservation, which resulted in the *Brookings Historic Preservation Plan*, adopted by the City Commission. Those priorities included downtown revitalization, a revolving loan fund, historic overlay zones, and clarifying and strengthening the City's historic preservation ordinance. The Plan has served as the City's official guide for preservation activities and actions for the last 18 years.

"Pat Fishback's leadership has a significant impact on historic preservation in Brookings and throughout South Dakota. Pat has accomplished much because of her dedication, passion, and perseverance in believing that as South Dakotans, we should celebrate our history through the preservation of historic buildings and structures. She is a champion above champions for historic preservation."

- Jay D. Vogt, Director and SHPO, South Dakota State Historical Society

Working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Pat led the three-year effort to create a new Historic Preservation Ordinance for the City of Brookings, which was adopted by the City Council in 2003. It became the "model" ordinance used by other historic preservation commissions in the state.

In 2000, Pat received the "Preservationist of the Year" from the Historic South Dakota Foundation for her work and commitment to preservation efforts in the Brookings community, and specifically for the Brookings Middle School. The school, built in 1921, was at one time considered for demolition. Her leadership for historic designation and grant applications saved the school and ultimately its adaptive reuse for offices and residential use.

Pat Fishback was involved in other successful campaigns to protect historic properties threatened by demolition, attending countless public meetings to advocate on behalf of historic preservation. Additionally, Pat actively worked on the City's 2020 Master Plan, the University Master Plan, the creation of the Main Street Program, Downtown Design Guidelines, and securing a permanent home for the Norby Newspaper and Photograph Collection.

"Pat has always approached her projects with good humor and enthusiasm and pays attention to every detail both inside and outside of the homes she has restored. She truly has the vision to look at a property that most others would throw up their hands in defeat and work with it to transform it into something truly amazing."

- Paul Porter, former SD SHPO Restoration Specialist, current Conservation Easement Coordinator/Technical Services Coordinator, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Pat also recognized the importance of preservation education and organized countless programs through the Historic Preservation Commission. A few examples include the historic house and urban arboretum guided walking tours, workshops for homeowners, realtor training, historic

district street signage, walking tour brochures, porch tours, welcome packets for new historic property owners, "Picture This" newspaper series, "Photo Day," *Brookings Preservationist* Newsletter, Children's Architectural Activity Workbook, home show booths and classes, and special event programming for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, University Week for Women, and the Girl Scout Jamboree.

Her passion and active involvement in historic preservation did not end after leaving the Commission. Pat has also demonstrated her commitment to historic preservation in her personal projects, winning individual Mayor's Awards for overall restoration of the "Historic Lockhardt House" at 1001 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue (2013), new construction at 423 8<sup>th</sup> Street (2015), and most recently the overall renovation of 610 Third Street (2016).

An ancient Chinese proverb states, "The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes." Pat Fishback's personal commitment has helped save critical historic structures that now shape the heritage of the Brookings community. She has demonstrated a lifelong passion, backed by her actions, to make Brookings livable for current generations and generations to come.

This award is named in honor of Mary McClure Bibby, a prominent political leader and active historic preservationist on the community, state and national levels. Mary was a transformative member of the Historic Preservation Commission from 2004 until her death in 2016. Mary was actively involved in historic preservation behind the scenes on a variety of fronts. Individuals receiving this award are recognized as champions of historic preservation, planning or public policy in the City of Brookings. The Mayor's Awards Reception was Mary's idea to celebrate the hard work of the winners and "have a party."