

Excellence in Personal Projects

Harry Truman and Linda Lou Moore National Bank of Commerce Building Paragould



The Excellence in Personal Projects award recognizes the achievement of individuals in preserving, rehabilitating, or restoring structures for their own use. At the time of nomination, the project should be substantially complete. Nominations for this award should focus on the completed project, the process involved, and the owner/user's specific efforts and contributions to the project.

Harry Truman (H.T.) Moore purchased the long neglected historic National Bank of Commerce building in the "One and Only" Downtown Paragould in 2009. Built in 1923 and listed as a contributing structure to the downtown commercial district, this classic revival style structure had seen better days. Moore, a local attorney, has long been in love with downtown. He is an amateur historian and wanted to make a difference in his community. He's put a great deal of love, time and money into a building that had been inappropriately altered over the years and has now brought it back to life.

Although some contractors recommended sandblasting the exterior, Moore ordered environmentally approved cleaning solvents to be gently used to address the muck and grime that had grown on the structure. On the south side of the exterior, the exposed brick was cleaned and tuck-pointed. Interior walls, with a lattice-work "ceiling," were inappropriately installed somewhere along the line. They've since been removed and in their place, multiple bookcases are used to house the law library which dates to the original firm founded 121 years ago.

When the worn carpet was removed, another piece of history was found - the original terrazzo floor. The uncovered floor featured multiple patterns which are believed to have delineated the original bank teller area, waiting area and office area. The floor was professionally cleaned and restored. Only one heavily damaged area required the installation of replacement tiles which were found with the help of the Main Street Arkansas interior design consultant. The marble walls and ledges below the downstairs windows were restored. Two places were found to be damaged almost beyond repair were able to be replaced with marble from the original construction that had been in storage since 1923.

Upon cleaning the bank's barrel-vaulted ceiling, beautiful medallions with Mercury head dimes denoting U.S. currency along with intricate feathers depicting Native American currency were revealed. The historic paint colors for the walls and the moldings and the ceiling were painstakingly re-mixed seven times to find the correct shades for the interior of the building.

The west mezzanine of the bank, originally the board room, now houses H.T. Moore's personal office. The mezzanine office features multiple antique pieces which help display Moore's collection of historical political memorabilia.

The top floor, which housed the law firm's predecessors from 1923 to 1964, features loft apartments which add vibrancy to the historic downtown. The apartments were built in compliance with fire code standards which were enacted during the course of construction and feature a state of the art fire and security system, including keyless entry locks and video surveillance. The custom tile floors were designed by a Main Street Arkansas consultant.

The building is frequently the site of charity events hosted by the Moores. Thanks to the Moores' commitment, it has become quite the hub in the bustling "One and Only" historic downtown Paragould.