

LOCAL HISTORIAN RECIPIENT  
OF NATIONAL TRUST FOR  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SCHOLARSHIP

Mrs. Willie Lee Gay, a retired history teacher and local historian, is a recipient of a National Trust Scholarship to attend the 46th National Preservation Conference. The conference is scheduled for October 7-11, 1992 in Miami, Florida.

Peter Brink, Vice-President of Programs, Services and Information with the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D. C. , personally called Mrs. Gay. He informed her that she had been selected as a recipient due to her dedication in historic preservation of the African-American community on local and state levels. Mrs. Gay will be among 2,000 attendees reflecting America's cultural diversity who will dialogue with peers, experts and leaders at the only conference of its kind for preservationists.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation was chartered by Congress in 1949. Mrs. Gay 's scholarship is partially funded by this organization and the underwriters are the Texas Historical Commission, the Harris County Heritage Society and the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance Executive Committee, She is actively involved in the latter three entities.

The purpose of the scholarship is to identify active minority leaders who are involved in the preservation movement, as well as encourage diversity at the National Preservation Conference. Therefore, they will acquire new skills and understanding of community efforts at the grass-roots where historic preservation begins and ends. "Fostering Appreciation for Cultural Diversity," is the conference's theme and focus.

Mrs. Gay has carefully viewed the preliminary program and selected relevant sessions that will provide her with experiences and skills to make a difference in preservation in her own community or state. Realizing the institutional role the church and its buildings have played for African-Americans, she has prioritize the session, "Preservation Strategies for the African-American Church.

With information she will obtain at the conference and her position as a Texas Historical Commission(First Black), she plans to address church groups about an important chapter to be added in Black history--the preservation of historic sites for future generations. She refers to the Bible as a resource in preserving history as stated in Psalms 145:4, "Let each generation tell its children what glorious things he does."

In addition to performing her duties as a commissioner, collecting and donating Black history to the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, volunteering work with other historical societies, organizations and church activities, she feels that God has blessed her with a bountiful amount of energy and she must continue to give of herself.

Recently, she was hired by Glencoe(Macmillan/McGraw-Hill) Publishing Company as a Per Diem Texas History Consultant to market their 1993 textbook in the HISD junior high schools. Mrs. Gay says that God continues to open doors for her and she is thankful.

Her husband is Vergel Gay, Sr., a Master Technician for Savings of America. They have one son, Vergel, Jr., Staff Manager of Architecture-Southwestern Bell Telephone, a daughter-in-law, Cynthia Gay-Director of University Outreach; two granddaughters, Courtney and Christel Gay.