







THE JESSE H.
JONES HALL
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Remarkable Experiences

SINCE
1966



“This Hall is given without reservation to be used and enjoyed by all. That is the way Mr. Jones would have wanted it.”

JOHN T. JONES, JR.

October 2, 1966

Jones Hall Dedication Ceremony



Local school students in the Houston All City Orchestra joined the Houston Chorale to lead everyone in the national anthem during Jones Hall's dedication ceremony on October 2, 1966.



CONTENTS

- 9 PRELUDE**
 - CITY AUDITORIUM
 - EDNA SAUNDERS
 - ANN HOLMES

- 21 THE JESSE H. JONES HALL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**
 - JONES HALL
 - GEMINI II
 - ORIGINAL RESIDENT COMPANIES
 - HOUSTON SYMPHONY
 - SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
 - HOUSTON BALLET
 - HOUSTON GRAND OPERA

- 59 THE JONESES**
 - JESSE H. JONES
 - JOHN T. JONES, JR.
 - AUDREY JONES BECK
 - HOUSTON ENDOWMENT

- 89 APPENDIX**

- 98 FRIENDS OF JONES HALL**



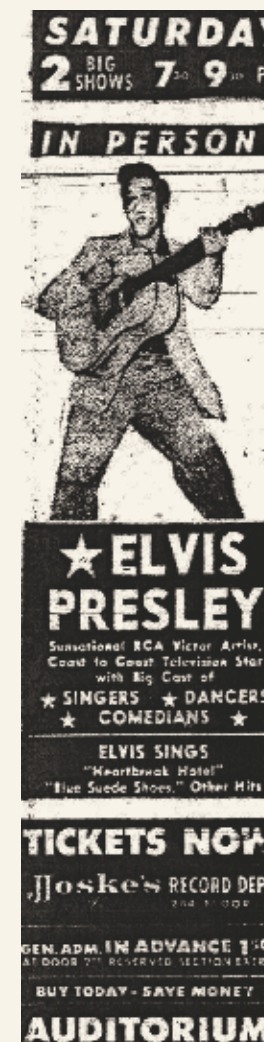
PRELUDE

*“Remember, John,
we still need a better
‘opera’ house.”*

JESSE H. JONES
to John T. Jones, Jr.
1956



THE CITY AUDITORIUM



The City Auditorium presented the most acclaimed performers of the day, from Enrico Caruso to Elvis Presley.

Houston Chronicle, April 20, 1956

From 1910 to 1963, the City Auditorium was Houston's center for concerts, conventions, parties and wrestling until it was demolished and replaced with the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.

Before Jones Hall, Houston had the City Auditorium. It was built in 1910 for \$235,000 (about \$6 million today) on the site where Jones Hall stands now. For decades, the 4,000-seat Auditorium was Houston's destination for thrilling concerts, crowded conventions, glamorous parties, tennis matches and over-the-top wrestling. During disasters, it served as a shelter, and once it was even used as a temporary firehouse. The City Auditorium was truly a multipurpose facility.

From the time Houston was established in 1836, its business and civic leaders led efforts to build the facilities and infrastructure required to make the city grow and thrive. They knew they would prosper only if their community flourished. In the first years of 1900, momentous events transformed Houston and its needs: the Spindletop well erupted and ushered in the local oil industry; a Gulf Coast hurricane killed at least 6,000 people, leveled a city and pushed development inland from Galveston to Houston; Jesse Jones built downtown's three tallest skyscrapers, each ten floors high; and work on the transformational Houston Ship Channel commenced. Houstonians had always enjoyed the performing arts, yet despite the city's progress in the early 1900s, there was no beautiful, up-to-date center to attract the finest performers and touring companies and to bring in large conventions. The Winnie Davis Auditorium, built in 1895 at the northeast corner of Main and McGowen—named for Confederate President Jefferson Davis's daughter, adulated by many in the south—was inadequate. It had no plumbing, barely had electricity and was far from the center of town. Appeals were made to Houston's city government to build a new structure for performances and gatherings in the central business district, and Jesse Jones, the go-to guy when something big needed to get done, was put in charge of the task. Jones, Houston's foremost developer, had enjoyed the best artists at the finest performance halls on the east coast and in Europe, and he wanted the same for Houston.

Construction began on the Romanesque-style building on March 1, 1910. The annual No-tsu-oh (*Houston* spelled backwards) Carnival Ball opened the City Auditorium eight and a half months later, on November 17, 1910. Two days after that, the Baptist General Convention of Texas filled the hall and dedicated it to

Before Jones Hall, Houston had the City Auditorium.

12



The City Auditorium was the Houston Symphony's home from 1931 to 1955.

“public righteousness.” From then on, the City Auditorium presented the most acclaimed performers of the day, from Enrico Caruso to Elvis Presley. The Houston Symphony called it home from 1931 to 1955. Most memorable to many were Morris Sigel’s Friday night wrestling matches, which were held there for 47 years with broadcasts to eager local television audiences added in the 1950s. On Saturday mornings, the day after the fights, the Houston Symphony held rehearsals in the City Auditorium, and the musicians were often aghast at what they had to walk through to reach their chairs and at what had been swept out from the hall.

The City Auditorium’s shortcomings were there from the start and became more apparent as it aged and as expectations in Houston changed. Loud industrial fans pushed air over blocks of ice in a noisy and feeble attempt to cool the cavernous hall, and consequently summer bookings and attendance were meager. Patrons who wanted front and center seats for musical and theatrical performances had to endure the discomfort of temporary folding wooden chairs. And rats occasionally ran across the stage and across audience members’ feet, prompting squeals and screams at inopportune times during performances. In its 1950s report to City Council about the Auditorium’s conditions, a committee frankly declared, “The entire building is a filthy barn and a disgrace to Houston.” Francis Deering, Houston’s director of facilities in the 1950s and ’60s, recalled, “The heat and bugs created a stigma that could not be removed.” The City of Houston put the building up for sale, but received no reasonable offer. Even Jesse Jones, who had been the Auditorium’s building chairman, grew dissatisfied with it early on, and in the late 1920s he began searching for a site and designing plans for a new hall; progress halted when the Great Depression, World War II and public service interrupted his effort.

John T. Jones, Jr.—Jesse Jones’s nephew—recalled that his uncle “had long wished for a new opera house, as he called it, for this city he loved so much.... He wanted Houston to have a fine center for the performing arts. He told me shortly before his death, ‘Remember, John, we still need a better “opera” house.’”



EDNA SAUNDERS

13

The quality and scope of today’s performing arts in Houston link directly back to Edna Saunders, for whom Jones Hall’s Green Room is named. Houston’s most influential and productive impresario for more than 40 years, she began bringing internationally acclaimed performers to town when fewer than 140,000 people lived here. Even though one of her first big ventures failed when the Chicago Civic Opera’s sold-out performance was cancelled in 1918 during the flu epidemic, Saunders proved her mettle despite her own personal tragedy: after attending her father’s funeral, she met the ticket holders on the day of the performance, refunded their money and signed the Chicago Civic Opera for the next season. They then returned for six seasons in a row. By 1920 she had Enrico Caruso singing to a standing-room-only crowd at Houston’s City Auditorium. Saunders recalled, “We were sold out.... We opened the doors, and Caruso sang ...with a voice that could be heard by those hundreds packing the sidewalks.”



Impresario Edna Saunders wowed Houstonians when she brought Enrico Caruso to the town of 140,000 residents in 1920.

*The quality and scope of today’s
performing arts in Houston link
directly back to Edna Saunders.*

Edna Saunders was born in 1880 and grew up in an affluent household on the corner of Texas and Fannin, a posh residential area that gave way to today’s central business district. Her father, John Woolford, was a prosperous cotton merchant who served as Houston’s mayor in 1901. He provided his family with exceptional advantages and opportunities: while she was growing up, Edna attended plays and concerts, studied piano and voice, and went to finishing schools in New York and Washington, D.C. She returned to Houston, married Ernest Saunders in 1902 and became a member of the Woman’s Choral Club, an association that would change both her life and Houston’s cultural landscape.

Club members presented musical performances for their friends and families. The enormous popularity of the concerts motivated the Club to bring in professional performing artists to further entertain their enthusiastic audiences. After

her marriage failed, Saunders found her true calling when she was put in charge of procuring the performers. By the time the 1910 opening of the 4,000-seat City Auditorium provided a venue large enough to attract and accommodate traveling companies, Saunders knew how to sign them up and draw Houstonians in with the best performers of the time. “The first thing I did professionally in the Auditorium was the French Army Band,” recalled Saunders. “We were sold out to the very doors.”

Soon “Miss Edna,” as she was fondly called, established Edna Saunders Presents, and for more than 40 years Houstonians anticipated with pleasure the annual announcement of her new season, which was typically packed with acclaimed symphony orchestras, opera companies, theater ensembles, soloists, lecturers and troupes performing children’s plays. Long before the city enjoyed its current wealth of performing arts organizations, and back when large east coast touring companies typically ignored the south because of inadequate facilities and the distance they had to travel, Houston had Edna Saunders to bring them in. An independent impresario who catered to the tastes of her city and who had a sharp eye for top-quality performers, she was among the best and last of her kind.

Because of Saunders’s persistence and reputation—she was a lifetime vice president of the International Association of Concert Managers—Houston audiences were treated to Fritz Kreisler playing his violin, Arturo Toscanini conducting the National Broadcasting System Philharmonic, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo dancing, Paderewski and Rachmaninoff and Rubinstein playing the piano, Ethel Barrymore performing the lead role in *The Constant Wife*, and writers, scientists, diplomats and artists giving talks at the Tower Theater through her Town Hall lecture series. Saunders also nurtured emerging artists, like violinist Yehudi Menuhin, whom she brought to Houston when he was only 16, and the young piano virtuoso Van Cliburn, who wowed enthralled listeners as she watched from the wings. Saunders single-handedly provided Houston with the same broad spectrum of sophisticated entertainment that it takes many organizations to collectively offer today. And sometimes she broke ground doing it.



For 40 years, Houstonians anticipated the annual announcement of Edna Saunders’s new season.

Saunders single-handedly provided Houston with the same broad spectrum of sophisticated entertainment that it takes many organizations to collectively offer today.

In the 1930s, Saunders brought celebrated contralto Marian Anderson to Houston for a performance and rearranged seating in the City Auditorium to accommodate those fans who were African-American like the singer. They normally found their seats at the top levels of the building, but for this concert Saunders divided the first floor in half: one half for white people, the other half for people of color. It created quite a stir when Saunders and Houston’s mayor took their seats in the latter section.

She produced a different kind of stir some years later when she persuaded the Metropolitan Opera Company to break its exclusive contract with a group in Dallas and to perform in Houston. Their 1947 appearance, complete with elaborate sets, costumes, a full orchestra and hundreds of actors and singers, was a huge undertaking and a risky gamble for Saunders, who assumed complete financial responsibility for all the acts she brought to town. But this time, she had a silent backer.

Formerly the *Houston Chronicle* fine arts editor, the late Ann Holmes told the story. “I discovered...[Jesse] Jones had been very active in getting the Metropolitan here early in the century. Just about the time Spindletop was coming in, he was negotiating to get the Grand Opera down here...,” she said. “The arts [in Houston], under Jesse Jones, were right in there with the big developments of the industrial world.... Undertaking something as big as the Metropolitan Opera, in those years, was phenomenal.”

But after performances in 1901 and 1905, the Opera did not return. Holmes continued, “In the middle forties, the Metropolitan Opera tended to go to Dallas, and it was so hurtful to Houston’s pride, of course.... And so Mrs. Saunders ... who was ... eager to bring the Metropolitan to Houston, worked with Jesse Jones, who was her silent partner.... She was able to break [the] stronghold that Dallas had, and the Opera started coming to Houston again after all of those years. And she said to me, ‘Jesse Jones is the one who sort of bankrolled me, or stood behind me....’” In the end, though, Saunders managed the feat on her own, saying to Holmes, “Proudly I can tell you, I never had to call on him.”



Jones Hall's Edna Saunders Green Room honors the woman who for more than four decades enriched life for Houstonians and opened doors to a robust future for the performing arts in Houston.

“Her efforts to bring us opera and ballet have stimulated in Houstonians the love they have today for these arts.”

ANN HOLMES

Saunders spoke to a reporter on June 3, 1962, just after Houston Endowment announced its gift of Jones Hall to the city. “I recall one night when the Metropolitan Opera Company was performing here,” she said, referring to the dilapidated and vermin-infested 1910 City Auditorium. “Mr. Jones came to me from his box where he had been sitting with his wife. We talked a long while.”

Saunders continued, “He could see the crudities of the building. He talked about what would be adequate. He had a great love for the performing arts.” She added, “The germ for the new auditorium began growing right then. He asked many questions about what I thought was needed to replace the old building.”

Edna Saunders passed away on December 21, 1963, one month before the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts groundbreaking ceremony and during her 46th season of top-tier presentations. At the Jones Hall ceremony, John T. Jones, Jr., recalled, “Miss Edna gave 46 years of her vitality, vision and good taste to the city. She left as a legacy the audiences which attend our Symphony concerts, the standing-room crowds at Houston Grand Opera, the people who stand in line to buy tickets to the performances of the Ballet.” In one of her many columns about Saunders, Holmes wrote in 1955, the year Houston Grand Opera and the Houston Foundation for Ballet were established, “Her efforts to bring us opera and ballet have stimulated in Houstonians the love they have today for these arts, and indirectly brought about this city’s plans to produce its own opera and ballet. Both the Houston Foundation for Ballet and the Houston Grand Opera Association have saluted her for this, and are rightly seeking her advice.”

Jones Hall’s Edna Saunders Green Room, graced by her portrait, is a comparatively small tribute to her enormous contributions to Houston’s vitality. Appropriately, it enshrines her name in the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, which sits on the site of the City Auditorium, the place Edna Saunders once filled with magnificent experiences that touched people’s hearts and minds and opened doors to a robust future for the performing arts in Houston.



ANN HOLMES

I interviewed Ann Holmes in 1998 as part of the oral history project I conducted to help Houston Endowment capture the memories of those who had known Jesse Jones. Excerpts from that interview are included in this tribute to Ann Holmes to add insight into her journalism, Jesse Jones and Jones Hall. Additionally, to create the Jones Hall commemorative materials and to tell, in small part, the history of the performing arts in Houston, I relied heavily on documents from Jesse Jones’s and Ann Holmes’s archives at Rice University. Each time I opened one of Ann’s files, I felt her smile.

STEVEN FENBERG

She reported on the gestation, construction and opening of the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.



Ann Holmes examining a Jones Hall model with the building’s architects.

Ann Holmes was the *Houston Chronicle’s* fine arts editor and critic from 1948 to 1998. She reported on the colorful and talented performers who graced Houston’s stages, on the local institutions that presented them and on the people and agencies that brought many of these artists to town. She covered the evolution of the arts in Houston during the last half of the twentieth century, when many of the city’s performing and visual arts organizations were emerging, and she reported on the gestation, construction and opening of the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts. Her employment at Jesse Jones’s *Houston Chronicle* and her close relationship with the John T. Jones, Jr., family made her vantage point unique. Indicating her warm ties with the Joneses, John T. Jones, Jr., named the dinghy the family used on the pond at their ranch the “Queen Ann.” With matching wit, Holmes, an accomplished sailor, named one of her boats “Jones Haul.”

Ann Holmes was born in 1922 in El Paso, Texas. Her father was a newspaperman for the Scripps Howard newspaper chain and her mother was an artist. She attended Whitworth College in Mississippi on an acting scholarship, so her insider understanding of the arts came naturally to her. She began her career at the *Houston Chronicle* at the age of 20 as a copy messenger and became the paper’s military editor, holding that position during and after World War II. Meanwhile she patiently waited to become the arts editor, the job she originally wanted—even though at the time there was no such position at the paper. But she did get to meet Jesse Jones.

Ann Holmes investigated and reported for 50 years about everything to do with the arts in Houston.

Early on, Holmes was called to the Joneses' Lamar Hotel apartment to interview a visiting admiral. She recalled, "[Jesse Jones] had the press conference at his apartment, his penthouse atop the Lamar Hotel. I had no idea who would be there or what was going to happen, and I certainly had never spoken directly to Jesse Jones. So it was terrifying for a little young reporter who didn't have a lot of worldly experience. So I went there, went up in the elevator and was greeted at the door by Mrs. Mary Gibbs Jones, who was a lovely lady with gentle manners, but a very firm way about her." Adding to Holmes's anxiety, she had to wait. Mary Gibbs Jones invited her to come in and said, "Mr. Jones will see you in a few minutes," and warned, "Please do not smoke. He doesn't care for smoking."

Within a couple of minutes, the press was invited into the Joneses' long, large living room. Holmes remembered, "So everyone filed past him. Associated Press, and United Press, and the *Houston Press*, the *Houston Post*, and the *Chronicle*, myself, all came by, and I'm not sure what others, ... to say 'how do you do' to Mr. Jones and the Admiral.

"So I got to Mr. Jones and, you know, I was very nervous, and I took a deep breath [to say] 'Hello, Mr. Jones,' and my belt broke, and he was a gentleman. I don't think he made any effort to notice it, but I certainly noticed it and was really kind of embarrassed about that. But he was so much the gentleman, and he carried off that press conference just elegantly. Always with great generosity of spirit, always great politeness and good manners." When Holmes introduced herself to Jesse Jones, despite her broken belt, she remembered he said, "Oh, so you're Miss Holmes, my military editor from the *Chronicle*." And I said, "That is right, Mr. Jones." She continued, "And that was a historical moment for me."



Sir John Barbirolli with Ima Hogg.



She would see him on occasion after that, but her meeting with him to request a year to study in Europe was more memorable and showed how much Jones valued the arts, respected education and wanted the best for Houston. Holmes recalled, "It was the Ogden Reed grant, which was given by the foundation set up by Ogden Reed, who was at that time head of the *New York Herald Tribune*. It was for reporters and editors who ... needed further experience to deepen their knowledge of things." Holmes wanted to find out how European artists lived and worked, and how the arts were funded, and to learn more about the continent's outstanding museums and concert halls. Houston audiences and performers at that time endured the un-air-conditioned and pest-infested City Auditorium and the damp and flimsy Music Hall, which allowed noise from boisterous events at the adjacent Coliseum to seep into the auditorium during performances. Holmes approached John T. Jones, Jr., her friend and president of the *Houston Chronicle*, about the grant and the time off. He said they'd have to see "Uncle Jess."

He arranged the appointment and Ann Holmes went to see "Uncle Jess." She recalled, "His secretary, Gladys Mikell, was there, and she said, 'He's waiting for you, Ann; just go right in.' So I opened the door, and there at the end of a very long room, in the corner at his desk, sat Jesse Holman Jones, looking so powerful and yet really friendly." Holmes remembered, "What was hard for me was walking that long distance. I didn't know what to say over the period of time it took for me to get from the corner, that diagonal. So ... I just waved at him and said, 'Hi.'"

She took a seat and asked him if he'd write a letter of endorsement for the grant and give her a year off to travel through Europe and bring back what she learned to Houston and the newspaper. He agreed, the letter was written, Holmes got the grant, and she spent a year in Europe learning about the arts so Houston could have the most well-informed fine arts critic, reporter and advocate possible. Others wrote letters of support, including Oveta Culp Hobby, owner of the *Houston Post*, the *Houston Chronicle*'s main competitor, who also understood the value of sending the young reporter abroad. But Holmes said it "was Jesse Jones's personal help to me that made a lot of difference in my life."



Ann Holmes spent a year in Europe learning about the arts so Houston could have the most well-informed fine arts critic, reporter and advocate possible.

*“It’s a beautifully designed building....
It’s elegant, handsome and welcoming.
And it’s got his name on it.”*

20

ANN HOLMES

Ann Holmes investigated and reported for 50 years about everything to do with the arts in Houston. Accordingly, she planned to write a comprehensive history about the city’s art world after she retired from the *Houston Chronicle*. She assembled a massive amount of material about all of Houston’s performing and visual arts organizations and the people involved in them, but she passed away in 2008 before she could translate her research into a book. For those interested in learning more about the rich history of the arts in Houston, the extensive research material she collected about practically every arts organization and institution in the city can now be found at the Woodson Research Center at Rice University’s Fondren Library.

During her Houston Endowment oral history interview, Ann Holmes said about Jesse Jones, “In my research about him, I have been really impressed with ... his eternal interest in what’s good for the people.” She said about Jones Hall, “I am glad to see that building with his name on it always. It’s a beautifully designed building. It stands out. It won a national prize in architecture. It has a lot of originality. It’s patrician. Those columns make it classic. Its overhang makes it typical for this part of the country. It is regionally correct. It provides shade and protection from the weather. It is nautilus shaped, original. It’s elegant, handsome and welcoming. And,” she repeated, referring to Jesse Jones, “it’s got his name on it.” From her personal perspective and uniquely informed point of view at the time of the interview, which was 42 years after Jones’s 1956 death, Ann Holmes concluded, “The quality of the arts would have pleased him a lot.”

From a *Houston Chronicle* 80-page special supplement, October 2, 1966.



THE JESSE H. JONES HALL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

*“This theater combines dignity and gaiety
in and under a classically disciplined structure.
Good theater—good architecture—good fun,
it is black tie all the way.”*

HONOR AWARD NOTIFICATION

American Institute of Architects
to Houston Endowment President J. Howard Creekmore
April 14, 1967



JONES HALL

Houston started the 1960s as a provincial boomtown and ended the decade as one of the world's great forward-looking cities. The Johnson Space Center—then known as the Manned Spacecraft Center—was formed in 1961 to explore space and to eventually send astronauts to the moon. The 44-floor Humble Building—the tallest building west of the Mississippi—opened in downtown in 1963. The Astrodome—the world's first multipurpose, air-conditioned, domed stadium—opened in 1965. And the gleaming Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts—the first building in Houston's nascent Theater District and, according to its engineer, the first building of its size to adjust acoustics with a movable ceiling—opened on October 2, 1966. It would become home to the Houston Symphony, Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet and the Society for the Performing Arts. Jesse Jones's vision of a vibrant performing arts center that provided remarkable experiences for the people of Houston had become a reality.

Jesse Jones passed away in 1956, but his family and the Houston Endowment trustees had not forgotten his devotion to the performing arts and his fervent desire to provide Houston with an inviting performance hall that would thrill audiences, enliven the arts and enhance the city. In the early 1960s, John T. Jones, Jr.—president of Houston Endowment and Jesse Jones's nephew—and the other Houston Endowment trustees held informal talks about building a new hall with Houston Mayor Lewis Cutrer and hired architectural firm Caudill Rowlett Scott (CRS) to determine the feasibility of placing one on the block then occupied by the obsolete City Auditorium, the location Jesse Jones expressly preferred. The architects visited and studied theaters around the globe; consulted with acoustical engineers, entertainment promoters, performers and local arts organizations; and determined that demand, the site size and the budget dictated what CRS lead architect Tom Bullock called a “multi-form, multi-purpose structure.” The Houston Endowment trustees agreed and decided to proceed with the project, and on June 1, 1962, they presented Mayor Cutrer and City Council with an offer to build a \$6 million (\$47 million today) state-of-the-art performing arts hall and give it to Houston. It would be the largest grant Houston Endowment had ever made, and the offer was met with unbridled excitement.

“It is not unusual that what he wanted to give to his city was a building—something that people could see and touch, use and enjoy.”

JOHN T. JONES, JR.,
ABOUT HIS UNCLE, JESSE H. JONES

THE WEATHER

Houston: Mostly cloudy with thunderstorms. Low to high, 10; high Saturday, 66.
Southeast Texas: Clear to partly cloudy.

More Data, Sec. 4, Page 10

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

FINAL

“Miss Classified” CA 4-6888 • Circulation Service CA 4-2061 • Other Depts. CA 7-2211

HOUSTON, TEXAS, FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 1962

★★ / 64 PAGES

10 Cents

Jones Fund Offers City \$6 Million To Build Theater-Arts Center

Mayor Cutrer said it was “the biggest single day in the history of the performing arts in Houston,” and he further declared, “This handsome gift places the City of Houston in a position where it can truly become one of the great leaders of art and culture in this nation.” The city's arts leaders, who also attended the meeting, agreed and, like the mayor, recognized the implications of the gift. Thomas Anderson, president of Houston Grand Opera, said, “It's the most exciting development of the century for opera in this community, and a great leap forward for all the performing arts.” General Maurice Hirsch, president of the Houston Symphony Society, simply gushed, “This is the greatest day in the history of Houston's art,” even though it was but one day in an exceptional week.

Just days before, Houston Endowment had given the Alley Theatre a half-block of downtown land for a new building. After the Jones Hall announcement, the late Ann Holmes, *Houston Chronicle's* fine arts critic, reported on the concurrent gifts: “The Houston Endowment gifts of land to the Alley and \$6 million to the city for the performing arts hall ... mean endorsement of the idea of the arts as important entities in our city life.” She elaborated, “The atmosphere becomes beneficial for the arts. Organizations know they must live up to higher ideals, and artists know at last that they are wanted here, yea, even needed here.” With foresight and characteristic modesty, John T. Jones, Jr., said to a reporter after the momentous City Council meeting, “We hope to help that whole area culturally with these gifts.”

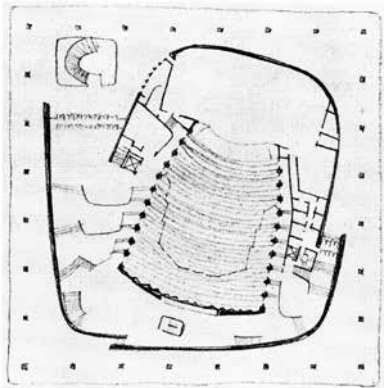
Within days, the city had formally accepted the proposal, which included Houston Endowment's request to find suitable locations for professional wrestling and boxing since they would not be welcomed in the elegant new hall. Six months later, on December 4, Houston Endowment presented preliminary plans, which the mayor and City Council approved. Then they voted to name the building the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.



On June 1, 1962, Houston Endowment president John T. Jones, Jr., handed Houston Mayor Lewis Cutrer a proposal to build a state-of-the-art performing arts hall and give it to Houston.

Soundproof rehearsal rooms, administrative offices and underground parking with air-conditioned passageways were all part of the plan. Noting the advent of dressing rooms for musicians and storage space for their instruments, Ann Holmes observed, “The old days of riding the bus to the concert carrying fiddles and oboes and wearing tail coats is done.” To accommodate as many people as possible, the auditorium was diagonally situated, like a slanted and elongated oval across a block-size box, to provide the most space and to create a large, welcoming lobby that would encourage the movement of space, light and people. As plans developed, light and movement became central themes and were emphasized in the glass-enclosed elevator, Richard Lippold’s *Gemini II* sculpture and the band of windows across the top of the lobby that glowed with light, visible from the outside, when the house was “live.”

Yale engineer and renowned theater designer George Izenour, who was famous for inventing the first electric light dimming system and for designing “convertible theaters” that worked well for music and the spoken word, was hired as a consultant. In an interview Izenour observed that most multipurpose theaters failed because the “technical principles that underlie an understanding of true spatial flexibility had been virtually ignored.” He added, referring to John T. Jones, Jr., and the Houston Endowment trustees, “New solutions demand adventurous clients as much as adventurous design.” Izenour’s solution for creating a space to accommodate symphonic music, opera, ballet, theater, lectures and chamber music was cutting edge and “space age.”



“New solutions demand adventurous clients as much as adventurous design.”

GEORGE IZENOUR

Izenour designed a system of 870 hexagonal sound-diffusing sections that collectively weighed 110 tons. Installed in the ceiling, the sections could be arranged in five different patterns to acoustically accommodate a variety of performances and to adjust the room to fit the size of the audience. Hung behind stationary walls, 110 tons of counterweights balanced the ceiling system—and prevented it from plummeting to the floor and on top of patrons. Other walls and screens could be raised or lowered to reduce the auditorium from 3,000 to 1,700 seats. The transformations happened within minutes of pushing a button, which activated complex mechanisms driven by 1966 era computers and engineering. Several performances and events, each requiring its own geometric room shape, could be held within a single day. Acoustics and auditorium size aside, from a practical point of view, Izenour pointed out, the flexible design reflected “the cold fact that a facility must be kept busy in order to pay its running expenses.” In addition, Izenour’s innovation gave Houston more of its many recent “firsts.” He claimed that “Jones Hall has the first articulated ceiling in the history of theater construction” and that it was “the first massive alteration of acoustical volume, by structural means, in a room this size.”

After the city approved Jones Hall’s final plans at another specially called meeting, promoter Morris Sigel held his last wrestling match on June 7, 1963, at the City Auditorium, and the building was closed for demolition. Ann Holmes duly reported, “From the ruins of the old building ... will rise a magnificent new structure, the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.” From then on, widely publicized ceremonies marked the Hall’s progress.



“Jones Hall has the first articulated ceiling in the history of theater construction.”

GEORGE IZENOUR

The first building in Houston’s nascent Theater District and, according to its engineer, the first building of its size to adjust acoustics with a movable ceiling, Jones Hall was designed to accommodate symphonic music, opera, ballet, theater, lectures and chamber music.



In 1966, 40 workmen spent ten months attaching the marble to Jones Hall's exterior and interior walls. The city block's nine-foot change in elevation required each of the columns around the building's perimeter to be a different length.

While Houston Symphony musicians played Sousa marches and “Deep in the Heart of Texas” outside during a cold winter’s day, hundreds of prominent Houstonians watched recently inaugurated Mayor Louie Welch, Houston’s City Council, the Houston Endowment trustees and representatives of the Hall’s destined-to-be resident companies turn the first soil at a groundbreaking ceremony on January 10, 1964. They listened to a recording of Edna Saunders’s last interview, along with John Jones’s touching tribute to her and his announcement that Jones Hall’s Green Room would bear her name. Edna Saunders, Houston’s leading impresario who for decades had entertained Houstonians and cultivated audiences for the performing arts, had passed away just the month before.

Bad weather, two strikes, the slow delivery of materials and the discovery of concrete water wells under the old City Auditorium delayed the project by a year. On October 20, 1965, the participants in Jones Hall’s development gathered again, this time to officially lay the building’s cornerstone. More than 200 people had earlier attended a luncheon at the Rice Hotel, where a time capsule was filled with recent Houston Symphony, Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet programs and photographs; a history of the arts in Houston written by *Houston Post* columnist Hubert Roussel; and a biography of the Joneses, which was placed in the capsule by their granddaughter, Audrey Jones Beck. At the cornerstone ceremony, John T. Jones, Jr., put the capsule in place and Audrey Jones Beck shoveled in the first dirt.

“We stand today on revered land, affixing a marker that will tell all, the good that Jesse H. Jones did during his lifetime lives on.”

MAYOR LOUIE WELCH



Mayor Louie Welch, Houston’s City Council, Houston Endowment’s trustees and representatives of Jones Hall’s resident companies turned the first soil for Jones Hall on January 10, 1964.

Mayor Louie Welch said, “We stand today on revered land, affixing a marker that will tell all, the good that Jesse H. Jones did during his lifetime lives on.”

By July 1966, the barricades around the Jones Hall construction site came down and revealed a phoenix rising from the ashes: a reborn performing arts hall now shined where the decrepit City Auditorium had once stood. Both the cultural arts in Houston and downtown’s decaying northwest quadrant were galvanized. The Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts rose across the street from the 12-floor 1926 Auditorium Hotel (now The Lancaster) in an area primarily occupied by a few flat-roofed, rundown two-floor buildings housing seedy bars and dark diners, set



Audrey Jones Beck, the Joneses’ granddaughter (top), places material into the Jones Hall time capsule that was buried during the cornerstone laying ceremony in 1965. John T. Jones, Jr. (bottom), puts the capsule in place, and Audrey Jones Beck (bottom right) shovels in the first dirt.



*“This will be one of
the finest theaters
in the world.”*

GEORGE A. FULLER COMPANY VICE PRESIDENT

among empty blocks of land waiting for redevelopment. In contrast, the bright new building, covered in smooth, off-white Italian travertine marble, was bathed in lights and glowed at night. Some suggested the travertine came from the same quarry in Tivoli that supplied Rome’s Colosseum. No matter its source, it took 40 workmen ten months to attach the marble to Jones Hall’s exterior and interior. To fit the curved walls, the craftsmen installed the marble with its strata running horizontally instead of vertically, which was the more conventional practice.

Like the Hall’s marble installation and its movable ceiling, hardly anything about the building was conventional and most everything was customized. Even the site demanded unusual finesse: the nine-foot change in elevation of the block required each of the columns around the building’s perimeter to be a different height. It was worth it. The graceful colonnade and the covered entrance inspired one of the building’s architects to observe, “The great veranda is Texas. It says, ‘Come in from the rain. Come in from the hot sun.’ It says, ‘Welcome.’ ... Houston will not only have found a generic solution to the multi-purpose music hall, but also will have an indigenous architecture.”

Jones Hall also had George A. Fuller Company—one of the nation’s most venerated contractors—as its builder. Fuller, established in 1882, had built the Plaza Hotel, Lincoln Center, Metropolitan Opera House, Seagram Building, Lever House and United Nations headquarters in New York City. In Washington, D.C., the company built the Lincoln Memorial, Constitution Hall and National Cathedral. Now it was building Jones Hall in Houston. Upon receiving the commission, a Fuller vice president exclaimed, “This will be one of the finest theaters in the world.”



“My uncle loved to build buildings, and he would have dearly loved to [have built] this one.”

JOHN T. JONES, JR.

In anticipation of Jones Hall’s completion and to recognize and promote the arts in Houston, the Chamber of Commerce coordinated a month-long Festival of the Arts. It invited every arts organization in the city to participate in the community-wide celebration that would coincide with the landmark building’s inauguration. In response to the announcement, Ann Holmes reported, “Houston’s arts in 1966 could afford to legitimately declare themselves to the world via a lively, glamorous festival of quality presentations. The arts here have had a dizzying upward spiral in the last 20 years.” The presentation of the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts by Houston Endowment to the City of Houston on October 2, 1966, accelerated that “dizzying upward spiral” to a new level.

At four p.m. on October 2, almost all of the 3,000 seats were filled by civic, cultural and business leaders, reporters from major news outlets and, accompanied by their proud wives and children, more than 700 workmen who had labored for three years to build Jones Hall. The first notes of music performed for an audience at Jones Hall came from the talented students in local schools who played in the Houston All City Orchestra. They joined the Houston Chorale to lead everyone in the national anthem. Jesse Jones’s great-nephew Reverend Garrett Wingfield gave the invocation, and after that, when he rose to speak, John T. Jones, Jr., received a prolonged standing ovation.



John T. Jones, Jr., at the October 2, 1966, dedication ceremony.



During the dedication ceremony, Audrey Jones Beck handed Mayor Louie Welch a working key to Jones Hall.

He then began, “While this is a day of festive celebration, I still find myself a little nostalgic when I remember the man and woman who made it all possible. More than any other of his many activities, my uncle loved to build buildings, and he would have dearly loved to [have built] this one.

“No secret has been made of the fact that a number of years before his death, he made the comment to me that ‘what Houston needs is a new “opera” house, and we have got to do something about it.’

“Unfortunately, illness and death denied him realization of his dream for Houston. The trustees of Houston Endowment, who at that time included his widow, Mary Gibbs Jones, and his longtime friend Fred Heyne, who was to Jesse Jones what this right hand is to me, knew of Mr. Jesse’s interest and determined quite early that as financial means became available, they would see that his wishes were carried out.” Jones Hall’s final cost was \$7.4 million (\$55 million today), all of which was paid by Houston Endowment.

John T. Jones continued, “This Hall is given without reservation to be used and enjoyed by all. That is the way Mr. Jones would have wanted it.” He recognized those who built the Hall and said, “To them, our honored guests, it was not just another job, just another place to work. It was not just nailing another nail or pouring of concrete. They were creating a receptacle of [the] hopes and spirits of a city. And they can be proud of what is theirs and yours today.” He also explained that the key about to be presented to Mayor Louie Welch actually opened the door to Jones Hall because his uncle “liked things that worked.” Audrey Jones Beck then handed Mayor Welch the key and said, “We hope this is the key to open many moments of happiness for everyone.” Gail Whitcomb, master of ceremonies and president of the Houston Chamber of Commerce, read congratulatory telegrams from President Lyndon Johnson and Governor John Connally, and told the audience one final official act remained: the following night’s grand opening.

“We hope this is the key to open many moments of happiness for everyone.”

AUDREY JONES BECK



Jones Hall was designed to glow at night, and on Monday, October 3, 1966, at around seven thirty p.m., it was radiant. As dapper men in tuxedos and women wearing sumptuous gowns and their most substantial jewelry began to arrive, the elongated glass front doors smoothly swung open, and the expectant patrons stepped into a new epoch in Houston. Their elegance and energy matched their surroundings, and their notion of what was possible in Houston instantly expanded as they stepped onto a sea of deep red carpet reaching to the off-white travertine walls that soared 66 feet up to Richard Lippold's sweeping and sparkling *Gemini II* sculpture.

The guests entered the teak-paneled auditorium awash in plush deep red seats and heard the 90-member Houston Symphony, under Sir John Barbirolli's baton, perform for the first time in Jones Hall. As part of its program, the Symphony premiered Alan Hovhaness's commissioned piece, *Ode to the Temple of Sound*. Jones Hall's grand opening received national attention.

Howard Taubman, legendary *New York Times* music and theater critic, wrote, "The suspense is over. Houston can relax and enjoy its new Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts. The opening concert of the Houston Symphony established clearly and firmly that the hall has unexpectedly fine acoustics." Even so, some said high-pitched sounds were too bright, and some thought low sounds got lost, but most everyone agreed the new Hall was exceptional and could be fine-tuned.

Time, *Newsweek* and *Business Week* praised Jones Hall's acoustics and marveled at its movable ceiling. *Time* magazine informed its readers, "To make sure that the acoustics would prove a ringing success, the ceiling is composed of 870 acoustical 'lenses' that can be raised or lowered to tune the hall." *Newsweek* reported, "The new hall works," and also raved about its unique ceiling and movable walls. One critic recalled, "I was at the openings of Philharmonic Hall and of Los Angeles' Music Center, and your hall sounds much better to me than both of them." European Belle Schulhof, agent for the world's greatest conductors, reportedly told Ann Holmes that Jones Hall was the most outstanding theater in the world at that moment.



Houston Symphony conductor Sir John Barbirolli during the concert for Jones Hall's grand opening.



(l-r) Robert Sakowitz, Audrey Jones Beck, John Beck and Lynn Wyatt at Jones Hall's grand opening on October 3, 1966.



From a *Houston Chronicle* 80-page special supplement, October 2, 1966.

The expectant patrons stepped into a new epoch in Houston.



The following day, as part of the opening celebration and the citywide Festival of the Arts, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston unveiled on its south lawn Eduardo Chillida's 60-ton granite sculpture *Song of Strength*, which had been commissioned by Houston Endowment in honor of Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones. The Joneses had supported the Museum since its 1924 inception, along with many other fledgling performing and visual arts organizations in Houston.

On Wednesday evening, it was Houston Grand Opera's turn, and the convertible theater's teak-lined 60-ton orchestra shell electronically slid away into storage to open the stage. Houston Grand Opera presented Verdi's extravagant *Aida*, with Richard Tucker and Gabriella Tucci singing the leads, and then repeated the performances on Friday and Sunday. To do so, the company moved its enormous and complex sets off and back on the stage three times in five days to make way for other scheduled performers, including the Joffrey Ballet, presented by the Houston Foundation for Ballet, and the Juilliard String Quartet, Jones Hall's first "intimate scaled event," where the auditorium's interior walls, screens and ceiling electronically dropped to shrink the huge room. Jostling presentations and tight schedules that week anticipated the future.

By the end of that first week of multiple performances, Ann Holmes reported that the "new Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts is 1) more beautiful in use than we had imagined it would be, and 2) ... also more complex because of the subtleties of that remarkable flexible ceiling." She recounted all the performances that had taken place in the Hall during the week and how Houston Grand Opera had magically moved, stored and reassembled its sets three times. She complained only about the street traffic outside the Hall, the crowded ticket counter, some minor and solvable acoustical shortcomings and inadequate lighting over Lippold's *Gemini II* sculpture. Otherwise, Holmes wrote that the opening week and festival month are "putting the big new theatre to the test—and finding that it works fantastically well."



The Houston Symphony's first performance at Jones Hall on October 3, 1966.

“Jones Hall is one of the most beautiful homes for music in the world.”

ROBERT C. MARSH, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Six months after Jones Hall opened, the American Institute of Architects selected Jones Hall and the CRS architects, out of 317 candidates, as one of 20 to receive its Honor Award, the nation’s highest accolade for architectural excellence. The jury said in part, “This theater combines dignity and gaiety in and under a classically disciplined structure. Good theater—good architecture—good fun, it is black tie all the way. What more can be expected of a theater? The performing arts have no alibi here—they have been challenged.” In response to the prestigious award, once again Jones Hall received national attention. Robert C. Marsh, the *Chicago Sun-Times* music critic, wrote, “All Texas, indeed, all the nation, must agree that Jones Hall is one of the most beautiful homes for music in the world.” The *Minneapolis Star’s* art critic recognized Jones Hall’s innovative mechanics and said it was “the most ingenious and versatile opera concert auditorium in the country.”

At that time, the Society for the Performing Arts was brand-new, and Houston Grand Opera and the Houston Foundation for Ballet were barely 11 years old—all of them only whispers of what they would become. Their state-of-the-art home provided an inspiring place in which the three organizations would flourish. The Houston Symphony, formed in 1913, was the oldest and most established of the four organizations sharing the Hall and was already nationally respected from its tours, broadcasts and recordings.

The Alley Theatre, which started in a dance studio at the end of an alley in 1947, had experienced rapid growth and would open its new, distinctive building diagonally across from Jones Hall in 1968, only two years after its neighbor’s grand opening. Jones Hall and the Alley Theatre faced Jones Plaza, a recently landscaped adjacent block, and the three formed the nucleus of Houston’s evolving Theater District, demonstrating the city’s growing but limited physical capacity to serve five major arts organizations and their expanding audiences.

Jones Hall’s four resident organizations vied for dates, and as they grew, it was apparent within a few years that more space was sorely needed. Still, it took more than 20 years after Jones Hall opened before the Wortham Center was added to Houston’s Theater District in 1987. Houston Ballet and Houston Grand Opera moved there and finally had a home of their own, while the Houston Symphony and the Society for the Performing Arts remained at Jones Hall.

By then Jones Hall, having endured 20-plus years of constant wear and tear, needed maintenance and renovation. The Houston Symphony and the Society



Photograph by Jeff Fitlow

for the Performing Arts formed the Foundation for Jones Hall to raise funds for the effort, and in turn the City of Houston, owner of the building, designated the two organizations as legal resident tenants with first priority for scheduling, similar to what Houston Ballet and Houston Grand Opera had arranged at the Wortham Center. Right off, the Foundation repaired the exterior, replaced the leaking roof and removed asbestos, which made it safe to operate the movable ceiling again, a welcome development, especially since Izenour and the CRS architects had started to complain that no one appeared to be around any longer who knew how to properly “operate” Jones Hall. The Foundation added more women’s restrooms, modified the building to accommodate people with disabilities, refinished the teak walls and repainted public areas. Over the years, the Foundation has upgraded Jones Hall’s lighting, computer and sound

systems; replaced worn out carpeting and seating; renovated the box office; purchased two Steinway grand pianos; and assumed leadership for the Hall’s reconstruction after the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Allison. The Foundation continues to support Jones Hall, along with Houston First, a valued local government corporation created in 2011 to operate and maintain the city’s convention and performing arts facilities.

Now, every year more than 300,000 people go to Jones Hall to enjoy performances, presentations and ceremonies. Appropriately, the Foundation for Jones Hall recently changed its name to the Friends of Jones Hall to welcome everyone who wants to help support and improve the transformative landmark building that for at least the next 50 years will continue to provide remarkable experiences that people will cherish forever.



GEMINI II

BY RICHARD LIPPOLD

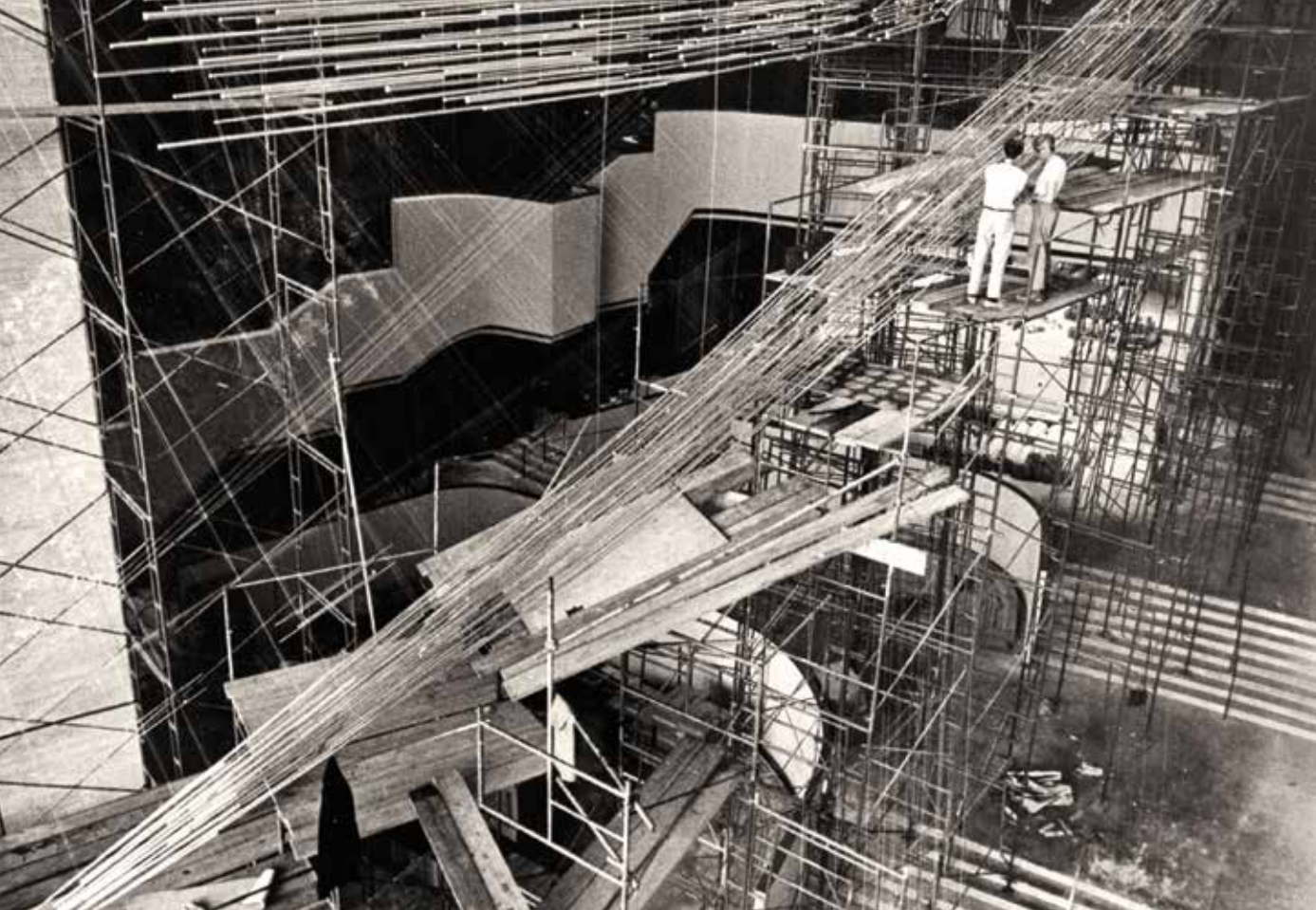
39

Instead of chandeliers, Richard Lippold's dynamic *Gemini II* sculpture sweeps across the Jones Hall lobby ceiling to unify and excite the space in a grand and glimmering gesture. In 1966 while installing the sculpture, Lippold explained, "I've tried to make a relation between the object and the architecture. The architecture is very beautiful—one of the most interesting public spaces of the twentieth century."

Richard Lippold was born in Milwaukee in 1915 and studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Chicago, where he began experimenting with wire and metal. His unique sculptures became increasingly refined and won acclaim, and in 1952 he was featured in an exhibition with Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. By the 1960s, noted architect Philip Johnson claimed, "He is *the* architectural sculptor." German architect and Bauhaus School founder Walter Gropius concurred, saying, "Unlike most sculptors, Lippold understands and respects architecture, space and architects." Both architects hired Lippold to install sculptures in some of their most prominent buildings in Manhattan, including Gropius's Pan Am (now MetLife) Building and Johnson's Four Seasons Restaurant.

Richard Lippold's dynamic Gemini II sculpture sweeps across the Jones Hall lobby ceiling to unify and excite the space in a grand and glimmering gesture.

Artist Richard Lippold with his *Gemini II* sculpture at Jones Hall.



Richard Lippold and his assistants worked from six-floor high scaffolding while arranging and installing nearly 4,000 polished aluminum tubes on strands of 22-karat gold-plated wire.

Lippold was also commissioned to install sculptures at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall and at the entrance to the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. At the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts in Houston, Lippold’s dazzling sculpture added to the building’s beauty and substance, burnished Houston’s image as a modern and sophisticated city, and furthered Jesse Jones’s vision of a vibrant urban center.

Lippold and his assistants assembled pieces of *Gemini II* in a small building one block away and transported the finished sections to Jones Hall for installation. Working from scaffolding six floors up in the air, they arranged and installed nearly 4,000 polished aluminum tubes, three feet to six feet in length, strung on strands of 22-karat gold-plated wire. They repeatedly viewed the piece from different angles and levels until Lippold was satisfied with the result and the effect. Lippold said, “In a sense, the lobby had become

my studio. Making the sculpture right on the job was part of the creative concept. It enabled us to study it in relation to the space, to make necessary adjustments.” In a 1968 *Newsweek* article, Lippold summarized his approach to his art: “I use hair-thin metals to sculpture space into itself and its surroundings and to seduce the viewer to look into the space. The material for me becomes minimal and the space becomes maximal. Space is the essential material for me.”

The two 90-foot forms that grace Jones Hall never touch but purposely intersect at a focal point in the lobby. They sometimes approach each other and even overlap when viewed from below; it is, as Lippold observed, “as though the promises of meeting suggested by the architectural elements have been fulfilled by the contrasting movement of the sculpture.” He added that *Gemini II* “represents an attempt to continue and to complete, in a sense, the gesture begun by a beautifully conceived architectural space. I supposed it also

“The sculpture acts as a liaison between the grandeur of the architectural scale and the scale of the spectator.”

RICHARD LIPPOLD



catches the feeling of the space program—certainly a valid symbol for Houston.” He continued, “The lengths of the rods as well as the sectional dimensions of the two forms relate both to human scale and to established dimensions of the architecture, so that the sculpture acts as a liaison between the grandeur of the architectural scale and the scale of the spectator.”

Soon after Lippold passed away in 2002, the Richard Lippold Foundation initiated a program to evaluate and preserve the artist’s works. In 2008, with funding from the City of Houston, the artist’s foundation hired a crew to climb up on scaffolding and clean each *Gemini II* aluminum rod and gold cable. A professional lighting company replaced the thirty incandescent lights installed in 1966 with LED lights to enhance illumination.

In his obituary, the *New York Times* called Lippold “a lyric poet of space and light,” and rightly so. Since its 1966 installation, the magnificence and unity of Richard Lippold’s shimmering masterpiece continues to thrill and uplift patrons each time they enter Jones Hall.

OTHER ART AT JONES HALL

The Dancer by Marcello Mascherini
Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Straus

Edna Saunders portrait by Charles Fox
Unknown acquisition

Interlude by CORE Design Studio
Commissioned by Houston First

Jesse Jones bas-relief by Lawrence M. Ludtke
Donated by Houston Endowment

John T. Jones, Jr., bas-relief by Lawrence M. Ludtke
Donated by Houston Endowment

Lily Pads by John E. Alexander
Donated by Susan McAshan

Orquesta by Adolfo Sayago
Donated by Michael and Vicky Richker

Pair of Horses by Robert Fowler
Commissioned 1963

The Story of Jones Hall Exhibition by CORE Design Studio
Commissioned by Houston First

Two untitled watercolors of Jones Hall by Charles Schorre
Donated by Houston Endowment



ORIGINAL RESIDENT COMPANIES

*“This handsome gift places
the City of Houston in a position where
it can truly become one of the great
leaders of art and culture
in this nation.”*

MAYOR LEWIS CUTRER

June 1, 1962



On June 21, 1913, a test concert was held at Jesse Jones's Majestic Theatre to gauge interest in establishing a symphony orchestra in Houston. The Majestic Theatre stood alongside the Houston Chronicle Building, at the right.



THE HOUSTON SYMPHONY

Go to the Symphony Concert!

YOU can do something "For the good of Houston" by attending the initial concert of the Houston Symphony Orchestra tomorrow afternoon. Houston **SHOULD** have a permanent symphony orchestra! Houston **CAN** have such an organization. Whether she **WILL** or not, however, depends upon public appreciation.

The first concert tomorrow will be *your* first opportunity of expressing *your* wish for this new acquisition to Houston's greatness. Express yourself by your presence.

Let us all go to that concert and so pack the Majestic Theatre that there can be no doubt in the promoters' minds that Houston wants such an orchestra. Let us do that much for "musical Houston." Let us encourage the proposition all we can. The interest shown in this first concert will govern largely the activity of the organization's promoters in the future. Concert is at 5 p.m. Saturday afternoon. Tickets on sale at Doscher's Jewelry Store, Goggan's, Oliver's and Carter's Music Houses. Seats 25 cents to \$1.00.

The Houston Symphony grew, performing for five seasons during the interlude between matinee and evening vaudeville shows at the Majestic Theatre.

Jesse Jones's relationship with the Houston Symphony began before the orchestra officially existed. He had helped bring the Russian Symphony Orchestra to Houston in 1911 to perform at the recently opened City Auditorium, and the concert motivated the local music community to form a resident symphony orchestra for Houston. Julien Paul Blitz, who trained in both Belgium and the United States, was an accomplished cellist and one of the most talented musicians in town. He was director of a local choral group called the Treble Clef Club, led the café orchestra at Sauter's restaurant and conducted the house orchestra at Jesse Jones's Rice Hotel. Ima Hogg—daughter of Texas Governor James Stephen Hogg—was like Jesse Jones in that she had traveled extensively, had experienced the best of the performing arts around the world and wanted the same for Houston. Blitz, Hogg and others assembled 35 musicians for rehearsals and a test concert on June 21, 1913, at Jesse Jones's Majestic Theatre to see if there was sufficient interest in establishing a symphony in Houston. The house was sold out, and on December 19, 1913, the Houston Symphony opened its first season with Blitz as its first conductor. Mary Gibbs Jones, then married to Jesse Jones's first cousin, was a founding Symphony board member.

The Houston Symphony grew, performing for five seasons during the interlude between matinee and evening vaudeville shows at the Majestic Theatre, then disbanded in 1918 as its musicians left to serve in World War I. After several attempts in the 1920s, the orchestra reconvened in 1931 with 75 musicians and once again sought to gauge interest by offering patrons a free trial concert in Jones's theater, which by then had been renamed the Palace. In addition, they performed six concerts with paid admission at the City Auditorium. Ticket sales did not quite cover expenses, but devoted benefactors donated the rest, and the Houston Symphony was up and going.

It took a great leap forward when Ernst Hoffmann became its conductor in 1936. Hoffmann expanded the season from six programs to nine, initiated student and pops concerts, brought in acclaimed guest soloists to perform with the orchestra, broadcast performances over the radio, began the free summer concert series at Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park and kept the orchestra intact during World War II. As part of its contribution to the war effort, the Houston Symphony performed for soldiers at Texas military bases. It also raised more than \$7 million in war bonds when it performed with Morris Sigel's wrestlers in 1944.

Efrem Kurtz, who followed Hoffmann as conductor in 1947, replaced 50 players and added a dozen more to improve the ensemble's sound. Kurtz increased the number of each season's programs to 20, took the orchestra on its first national tour and, in addition to its regular season performances at the City Auditorium, added "Promenade Concerts" at the Music Hall. There bursts of noise from sports events, circuses and other loud shows intruded through the wall separating the Music Hall from the Coliseum, making the need for a dedicated performance space painfully obvious. Still the Houston Symphony flourished, and Houston Endowment, with Jesse and Mary Gibbs Jones's guidance, began to sponsor regular broadcasts of its performances over local AM radio so everyone could have access to the music.

Leopold Stokowski became music director in 1955 and continued the Symphony's forward momentum toward excellence and national prominence by producing nine acclaimed recordings and introducing a dozen world premieres of new



music. Sir John Barbirolli took over the baton in 1961, and on October 3, 1966, Barbirolli and the Houston Symphony opened their first program in the sparkling state-of-the-art auditorium with Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite No. 2.

In stark contrast to its previous acoustically inadequate halls, especially the uncomfortable City Auditorium, the Houston Symphony's new home was regarded as one of the finest auditoriums in the world. Even so, because it shared Jones Hall with Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet and the Society for the Performing Arts, the orchestra had to plan four seasons out in advance so it could reserve 20 Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons for its performances. The musicians also clamored for rehearsal time on the stage rather than in the rehearsal space, where the acoustics were dramatically different from those in the auditorium.

Christoph Eschenbach—trained by renowned conductors Herbert von Karajan and George Szell—became music director shortly after Houston Grand Opera and Houston

Ballet moved to the Wortham Center in 1987, which alleviated some of the scheduling pressure for the Houston Symphony and the Society for the Performing Arts, Jones Hall's two remaining resident companies. At that time, one-quarter of the musicians had been with the orchestra at least since the opening of Jones Hall in 1966, some of them since the 1940s and '50s, and one since 1936. They were all fine musicians, but as new musicians gradually took their place, and Eschenbach exerted his influence over all of them, the Houston Symphony reached new heights of excellence. Eschenbach took the orchestra on its first Asian and European tours during which the Houston Symphony became internationally respected. By the time Hans Graf took over in 2001, only four of the musicians who had performed under Barbirolli and before his time remained.

The new millennium brought unprecedented challenges to the Houston Symphony. Tropical Storm Allison dropped 40

inches of rain in two days on Houston in June 2001, flooded the orchestra's offices at Jones Hall and destroyed most of its music library, its photo archives, two concert grand Steinway pianos, many other instruments and the organization's entire computer and communication system. Soon after that, Jones Hall's travertine marble started falling off the exterior walls and onto the sidewalk and streets. Renovations required three years of scaffolding, construction, noise and inconvenience. Over the years, Graf, the board and staff, and the Foundation for Jones Hall overcame these challenges and succeeded in rebuilding the facilities, the orchestra, audience attendance and patron support.

Most recently the Houston Symphony, led by Steve Mach as board president and Mark Hanson as its executive director and CEO, set a goal to be "America's most relevant and accessible top-ten orchestra" by 2025. When Jones Hall opened in 1966, more than 70 percent of Harris County's



(l-r) To give everyone access to the music, past Houston Symphony Society board chair Harmon Whittington, Ima Hogg, Jesse Jones and John T. Jones, Jr., sign Houston Endowment agreements to broadcast the Houston Symphony over KTRH radio.

Ima Hogg had experienced the best of the performing arts around the world and wanted the same for Houston.

The oldest and largest performing arts organization in Houston continues to fill Jones Hall with glorious music and to grace the city and the world with its invaluable presence.

population was Anglo-American. Now 41 percent of the people living here are Hispanic-American, 33 percent are Anglo-American, 18 percent are African-American and 8 percent are Asian-American. According to the Kinder Houston Area Survey, conducted annually by Rice University sociologist Stephen Klineberg, there is a more equal distribution among the United States' four major ethnic communities in Houston than anywhere else in the nation. In response, the Symphony board has formed Leadership Councils representing each of Houston's ethnic groups to help inform and guide the effort to engage people of all ages and backgrounds with classical music. In addition to its 140 full orchestra concerts each season in Jones Hall, the Houston Symphony presents more than 950 educational programs and community engagement performances every year, including respected competitions, concerts geared specifically for children and for families, resources for teachers, a free day of music at Jones Hall and "community embedded" musicians who teach and perform in schools, community centers and health care facilities throughout greater Houston.

In 2013, Colombian-born and Viennese-trained conductor Andrés Orozco-Estrada was hired as music director, the first Hispanic to hold the position in the Symphony's 103-year history. Orozco-Estrada, who has conducted the world's greatest orchestras, now delights Houstonians with world premieres, classical masterpieces and contemporary music in concerts that are sometimes blended with innovative multimedia components and illuminating commentary delivered by him and the musicians during performances. In contrast to national trends, Houston Symphony audiences are growing and becoming more diverse, budgets are balanced, and the oldest and largest performing arts organization in Houston continues to fill Jones Hall with glorious music and to grace the city and the world with its invaluable presence.

The following have served as music director since the Houston Symphony was established in 1913: Julien Paul Blitz, Paul Bergé, Uriel Nespoli, Frank St. Leger, Ernst Hoffmann, Efrem Kurtz, Ferenc Fricsay, Leopold Stokowski, Sir John Barbirolli, André Previn, Lawrence Foster, Sergiu Comissiona, Christoph Eschenbach, Hans Graf and Andrés Orozco-Estrada.

The Houston Symphony's world premiere of *The Earth*, part of a series that culminated in the May 2016 world premiere of *The Cosmos*.

Photograph by Michelle Watson/CatchLight Group





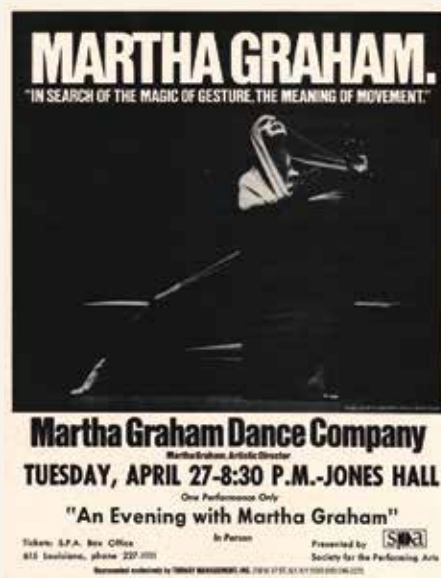
THE SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Society for the Performing Arts was soon poised to bring “the best of the best” to Houston.

The renowned American Ballet Theatre performed at Houston’s leaky Music Hall on February 9, 1964. It was the last event brought in by Edna Saunders Presents, the company led by Houston’s great impresario. She had passed away two months before, leaving a huge hole in patrons’ hearts and in the city’s rich performing arts calendar. “Miss Edna” had presented top-flight and hard-to-get artists and performances in Houston for 46 years. There was an almost immediate rush to fill the gap.

Saunders personally paid for every performance she brought to town, and each time it was a huge gamble. Ann Holmes remembered, “I have seen Edna Saunders sit like a queen in her box while a renowned artist played the violin to a handful of people on a bad night....Hundreds of dollars went down the drain. But she wasn’t sorry about the booking for one moment.” Holmes called her, “Cool Hand Luke in a large velvet hat.” For most booking agents, the logistical and financial magnitude of bringing huge acts and acclaimed performers to town was daunting. One group even proposed that Dallas and Houston join forces to manage the process, but predictable civic jealousies quashed that notion. Others attempted to establish production companies and agencies, but their efforts were short-lived. Financial returns on the enormous investments were risky and slim at best, and such ventures proved difficult to justify.

At this point, John T. Jones, Jr., stepped up once again to advance the performing arts in Houston. On July 6, 1966—more than two years after



Since it began in 1966, the Society for the Performing Arts has brought the world’s most outstanding performing artists and companies to Houston, including Martha Graham, who appeared in Houston five times between 1970 and 2005.

Edna Saunders Presents ended operations and less than three months before the opening of Jones Hall—he went before Houston’s City Council, accompanied by Ann Sakowitz, Gus Wortham and Edward Rotan, and offered to establish the Society for the Performing Arts (SPA) as a Jones Hall-based nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing the finest performing artists to town.

As Ann Holmes reported in the *Houston Chronicle* the next day, “Major attractions, like the Bolshoi Ballet ... the Royal Ballet with Fonteyn and Nureyev and other events of like magnitude, have not played here, largely for want of a dynamic booking agency. For a city sixth in size in the nation to continually be shunned by the most spectacular traveling arts attractions is a disappointment to hundreds of thousands of devotees. But more than that, a city’s apparent inability to import big arts events is a detriment to its reputation as a metropolitan center.” The City of Houston—owner of Jones Hall—approved the plan, and the SPA was soon poised to bring “the best of the best” to Houston upon the opening of the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, where the SPA established its new offices.

John T. Jones, Jr., served as the SPA’s first president, while a board of 75 members guaranteed the funds required to pay performers if ticket sales lagged. William McKelvy Martin—previously president of the International Association of Concert Managers, director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music and manager of the Pittsburgh and Cleveland symphony orchestras—became the SPA’s first manager. Substantial experience and infrastructure were required to replace Edna Saunders and to ensure that the most thrilling performers continued to grace Houston.

During 1967, its first full year of operations, the SPA enlisted acclaimed soprano Montserrat Caballé to inaugurate its Recital Series. Before she arrived in Houston, one New York critic forewarned that she had “caused a veritable furor in Carnegie Hall” during her performance. Thanks to the new organization, celebrated performers and extravagant productions began to find their way back to Houston. At the end of the year, the SPA brought the Canadian Ballet Company, the Montreal Symphonic Choir, a pit orchestra, sets and technicians to Houston, transporting everyone in three full buses, to begin its Dance Series with Carl Orff’s



Always presenting what is new and fresh at Jones Hall, the SPA brought *STOMP*, the theatrical percussive hit, to Houston during its first U.S. tour and for return performances eight other times; during its current season, the SPA will offer another electrifying *STOMP* performance that includes two new full-scale routines. Photograph by Lois Greenfield

The SPA has elevated Houston’s stature and enriched the city’s cultural life with over 1,000 standout performances by the world’s best artists.

HOUSTON BALLET

On July 25, 1955, the Houston Foundation for Ballet was established.



In 1967, the Houston Foundation for Ballet and its director, Nina Popova, presented an acclaimed performance of *Giselle*, which led to the establishment of Houston Ballet on March 7, 1968.

In 1955 former Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo ballerina Tatiana Semenova brought her company, American Youth Ballet, to Houston for two performances in the San Jacinto High School auditorium. Some of those who attended were so taken with the performance they invited Semenova to return to Houston to meet with a group about forming and leading an academy to train serious dancers and to eventually form a professional ballet company. Houston was ready. Edna Saunders for decades had developed and delighted Houston's dance audience by bringing in the world's best ballet companies. These bookings included the highly anticipated Christmastime performances by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, which came to town 11 seasons in a row, foreshadowing Houston Ballet's annual holiday presentation of *The Nutcracker*.

Semenova came to town and agreed to head an academy, and on July 25, 1955, the Houston Foundation for Ballet was established. In just weeks, ground was broken at 813 Lovett Boulevard for the academy's new building, and two students signed up to train five days a week. The following year, the academy enrolled 75 students—only two of them boys—and soon the students were performing with the Houston Symphony and Houston Grand Opera in their programs that required dancers. After the students performed in the newly formed Houston Grand Opera's production of *Cinderella*, *Houston Chronicle's* Ann Holmes reported, "They brought down the house." In 1959 the Foundation collaborated with the Houston Symphony in staging *Enigma* at the Music Hall, its first major production. And in 1960, although the Foundation had not yet formally established a company, its students became Houston Grand Opera's official dancers.

The school outgrew its original headquarters and moved to larger facilities on West Gray Street. In 1966 the Houston Foundation for Ballet moved to Jones Hall where, at the Hall's grand opening, the academy students performed in the Houston Grand Opera presentation of *Aida*. The Foundation then brought in the up-and-coming Joffrey Ballet Company to inaugurate its new home. That same year, Nina Popova, another Russian who had danced with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, left her position heading the dance program at New York's High



Making its Houston premiere at Jones Hall in 2017, *Circus 1903—The Golden Age of Circus* will astound audiences with huge puppets and special effects that mimic animal acts and will offer "the most amazing, dangerous and exceptional acts from the four corners of the globe" in a captivating circus extravaganza for the entire family.

complex *Carmina Burana*. The SPA press release said it was "the largest group ever to tour the United States and the first ballet to tour with a choral group." Within a matter of years, Ann Holmes's benchmarks had been reached: In 1969, Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn performed in Houston on the Jones Hall stage under the auspices of the SPA. In 1975, the SPA brought the Bolshoi Ballet to Houston.

In its first ten years, the SPA presented 207 top-flight artists and attractions, with almost a third of them performing in Houston for the first time. On average, SPA events filled 80 percent of Jones Hall's 3,000 seats and often the house was sold out. A separate block of tickets was priced as low as two dollars so everyone had the opportunity to experience great artists and performances in Houston.

During the past 50 years, the SPA has elevated Houston's stature and enriched the city's cultural life with over 1,000 standout performances by the world's best artists. Today, under board chair Theresa Einhorn and CEO June Christensen's leadership, it is now the largest nonprofit presenting organization in the southwest. In addition, the SPA's robust educational department engages Houstonians in the arts through a wide range of enlightening programs

and partnerships, including pre-performance learning activities for families, professional development for teachers, master classes with leading artists, literacy classes with other nonprofit agencies and discounted student matinee tickets so young people, particularly low-income students, can benefit from and enjoy the arts.

During its tenth anniversary celebration, John T. Jones, Jr., founding SPA president, recalled the purpose behind establishing the organization: "Its founders believed that our community deserved cultural affairs of such international significance to complete the urban and cosmopolitan life worthy of one of the greatest cities in the world.... This is now one of the few American cities to provide such a profusion of cultural riches in all of the arts for its citizens." Since its inception, the SPA has perpetuated its founders' intentions by presenting artists whose excellence, presence and performances delight patrons and distinguish Houston as one of the outstanding cultural capitals of the world.

The following have served as chief executive officer since the Society for the Performing Arts was established in 1966: William McKelvey Martin, James Berhard, Leon Petrus, Tobby Mattox, Georgiana Young and June Christensen.

School for the Performing Arts to take over from Semenova. In 1967 Popova and the Foundation presented *Giselle*, which received wide press coverage, including reviews by Clive Barnes of the *New York Times* and Doris Henin of *Dance News*. Ann Holmes said the performance was “the greatest moment in this city’s ballet history.” The acclaimed performance encouraged enthusiastic local support and led to the establishment of Houston’s first professional ballet company, Houston Ballet, on March 7, 1968.

Houston and Jones Hall provided fertile ground for the company’s strong growth. Ben Stevenson, who became artistic director in 1976, developed the school and the company from a regional ensemble into an internationally renowned dance powerhouse. In 1987 Houston Ballet, along with Houston Grand Opera, moved from Jones Hall to its new home at the Wortham Center. Stanton Welch became Houston Ballet’s artistic director in 2003, and eight years later the Foundation built the Houston Ballet Center for Dance. Situated across from the Wortham Center, where the company continues to perform, the six-floor structure is the largest professional dance support facility in the United States. James Nelson, who received his professional dance training at the Houston Ballet Academy in the 1980s, now serves as Houston Ballet’s executive director, and Allison Thacker leads the organization as board chair.

Today Houston Ballet presents around 75 performances each year at the Wortham Center, and the academy provides 60 percent of the company’s dancers. In addition, Houston Ballet initiates and leads collaborations with other major American ballet companies to create innovative new productions, and it tours nationally and internationally as one of the leading ballet companies in the world. In just one of many shining examples of its reach, Houston Ballet was the first full American ballet company invited to perform in China, where more than 500 million Chinese television viewers watched the company from Houston perform Ben Stevenson’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Houston Ballet, now the fifth largest company in the United States, shows its patrons and the world the best Houston has to offer.

The following have served as artistic director since Houston Ballet was established in 1955: Tatiana Semenova, Nina Popova, James Clouser, Ben Stevenson and Stanton Welch.



Houston Foundation for Ballet director Nina Popova (right) and a group of eager students.



Houston Ballet presented its debut performance at Jones Hall on May 14, 1969.

Jones Hall provided fertile ground for the company’s strong growth.

Houston Ballet principal dancers Connor Walsh and Yoriko Kajiya finished the 2015-16 season with Stanton Welch’s production of the company’s touchstone *Giselle*.
Photograph by Amitava Sarkar





HOUSTON GRAND OPERA

In 1954 Walter Herbert, general director and conductor of the esteemed New Orleans Opera, wrote to *Houston Chronicle* arts critic Ann Holmes, “I have repeatedly seen in your column encouragement to have an opera in Houston. I think it would go over big and am very well interested in helping build it up.” Indeed, there had been much talk over the years about establishing a professional opera company in Houston, and by the summer of 1955 daily articles in the city’s newspapers raised the volume of those discussions. Then on August 9, barely weeks after the new Houston Foundation for Ballet had been established and started planning its academy, a group of local opera lovers met at the home of Elva Cockrell Lobit and decided to establish Houston Grand Opera with Walter Herbert as its first general director. The founders were visionary and thorough. They established HGO Chorus at the same time and two months later formed HGO Guild to give supporters a way to promote and develop the new company.

During its first season in 1956, Houston Grand Opera (HGO) presented *Salome* by Richard Strauss and Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*, each for two performances in January at the Music Hall. Local talent, hungry to sing professionally, was auditioned and recruited, along with the notable singers that Herbert signed up in New York. Staging the operas with its \$40,000 budget (\$360,000 today) was a huge undertaking for the new company. In addition to hiring and rehearsing singers, the company had to produce elaborate sets and costumes and provide musical accompaniment, all superb enough to compete with the Metropolitan Opera and other renowned companies brought to town by Edna Saunders. Even so, the company had the community’s support. Printed programs included ads and endorsements from supporters, with the back page of each booklet purchased “with compliments of Jesse H. Jones Interests.”



To open its 12th season and for its first program at Jones Hall, Houston Grand Opera presented *Aida* accompanied by the Houston Symphony and dancers from the Houston Foundation for Ballet academy. Reporter Ann Holmes wrote it was one of the most “spectacular evenings in Houston’s musical history.”

The ambitious HGO looked forward to nurturing future singers even in its first year when it offered a summer workshop—the first of its outstanding educational programs—to develop interested opera students. The following year, HGO expanded its season to two performances of three operas. It also began its first efforts to broaden its reach through “Shop and Show” weekends, where HGO would fly or bus in patrons from outlying cities and give them time to shop, have dinner and attend the opera before returning them home. In addition, HGO began performing on Friday and Saturday evenings, instead of during the week.

By 1966 HGO was presenting five productions each year, and when it moved to Jones Hall, the company was performing each opera three times instead of two. During Jones Hall’s inaugural week, HGO opened its 12th season with *Aida*. Gabriella Tucci and Richard Tucker performed with the talented HGO soloists and chorus, accompanied by the Houston Symphony conducted by Walter Herbert. The Houston Foundation for Ballet academy supplied some of the opera’s dancers, so it was a Jones Hall family affair on this most auspicious occasion. Without stinting her praise, Ann Holmes reported that it was one of the most “spectacular evenings in Houston’s musical history” and added, “The most opulent audience of the season, filling every seat all the way up to those red velvet rafters, cheered until the new house reverberated.” A few weeks later, HGO presented Beverly Sills in her Houston debut in *The Magic Flute*, the first of many appearances for the company. The following year, Placido Domingo came to Houston for the first time to perform in *Faust*.

The success and growth of HGO and Jones Hall’s three other thriving resident companies led to the development of the Wortham Center, which opened in 1987 and became home to Houston Ballet and HGO. There, under David Gockley’s direction, HGO continued to trailblaze with new and innovative productions and the first use of surtitles. Anthony Freud led HGO for six years after Gockley left and took the reins at San Francisco Opera. Today, with James Crownover as board chair and under the dual leadership of Perryn Leech as managing director and Patrick Summers as artistic and music director, the HGO Chorus, started in 1955, has become one of the most acclaimed opera choruses in the world. And the HGO orchestra that accompanies the singers matches their excellence.

Cultivating audiences and providing educational opportunities, imbedded in HGO’s culture from the start, is ongoing. Like the earlier “Shop and Show” effort, HGOco, the company’s community engagement initiative, offers innovative and collaborative programs that remove barriers to access and encourage people to participate. HGO presents operas at Miller Outdoor Theater and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavillion, takes opera into schools and creates and presents new *Song of Houston* operas that celebrate the city’s unique character. Echoing its first summer camps, HGO Studio was formed in 1989 by David Gockley and Carlisle Floyd, and the world-renowned program continues to develop talented young artists and prepares them for careers in the operatic and musical theater profession.

“The most opulent audience of the season ... cheered until the new house reverberated.”

ANN HOLMES



Die Walküre performed by Houston Grand Opera.
Photograph by Lynn Lane

Houston Grand Opera has had spectacular success and enjoyed phenomenal growth since 1955. Over the years, it has presented 63 world premieres and seven U.S. premieres, and it is the only opera company in the world to win a Tony award, two Grammy awards and two Emmy awards. HGO wows audiences around the world and across the nation during its tours, and by presenting seven to eight thrilling operas each season at the Wortham Center, it amply fulfills its mission of “creating operatic art that provides access to music’s boundless power and beauty.”

The following have served as general and/or artistic director since Houston Grand Opera was established in 1955: Walter Herbert, David Gockley, Anthony Freud, and Patrick Summers with Perryn Leech.

Houston Grand Opera is the only opera company in the world to win a Tony award, two Grammy awards and two Emmy awards.



THE JONESES

“Next to the President, no man in the Government and probably in the United States wields greater powers.”

SATURDAY EVENING POST

Two-part feature story about Jesse Jones

November 30, 1940



JESSE HOLMAN JONES



Jesse Jones, who grew up on his father's Tennessee tobacco farm, was 24 when he moved to Houston to manage his Uncle M.T. Jones's estate.

They knew they would prosper only if their community flourished.

Jesse Jones found himself in the midst of Houston's civic and business leadership when he moved to town in 1898 at the age of 24 to manage his late uncle M. T. Jones's estate of timberland, sawmills and lumberyards. Houston's leaders were simultaneously building their businesses and the organizations and infrastructure that would serve people, enhance life and spur growth in the town of 40,000. They knew they would prosper only if their community flourished. Jesse Jones embraced their combination of capitalism and public service from the time he stepped off the train to start his new life in Houston.

Jesse Jones grew up on his father's successful tobacco farm in rural Tennessee. His dad put him in charge of one of its processing factories after he turned 14 and left school. Jones's father instilled self-confidence in his son: as Jones recalled, "When father told me he was going to put me in charge of the factory, I asked him if he thought I could do it. He replied that I could do it as well as he could.... I, of course, knew that I could not do the job as well as father, but, when he told me I could do it, I felt I could." Jones added, "I got my first business training and business principles from my father... and his standards and principles have been my guiding influence in all my business and public life." He later took his Uncle M.T. and Aunt Louisa as role models, too. In addition to building an immensely successful lumber business, M.T. and Louisa helped establish Houston's St. Paul's Methodist Church, DePelchin Faith Home for orphans and the Young Women's Cooperative Home for destitute and unmarried pregnant women. Jones took over where they left off.

Within four years of his arrival in Houston, Jones started his own lumber business, invested in local banks and began developing streets in today's Midtown



Between 1907 and 1909 Jesse Jones built Houston's first three skyscrapers, each ten floors tall. The Bristol Hotel, one of Houston's first luxury hotels, was demolished in the 1950s and replaced with Jesse Jones's last skyscraper, the Houston Club Building, which was demolished in turn in 2014.

where he built and sold small homes. By 1908, he was building Houston's first skyscrapers, each ten floors tall: the Houston Chronicle Building brought him a half-interest in the paper, which he would eventually buy outright; the Bristol Hotel gave downtown one of its first luxury hotels; and the Texas Building brought Texaco and the petroleum industry to town. In effect, Jones built more than houses and buildings. He also helped build Houston.

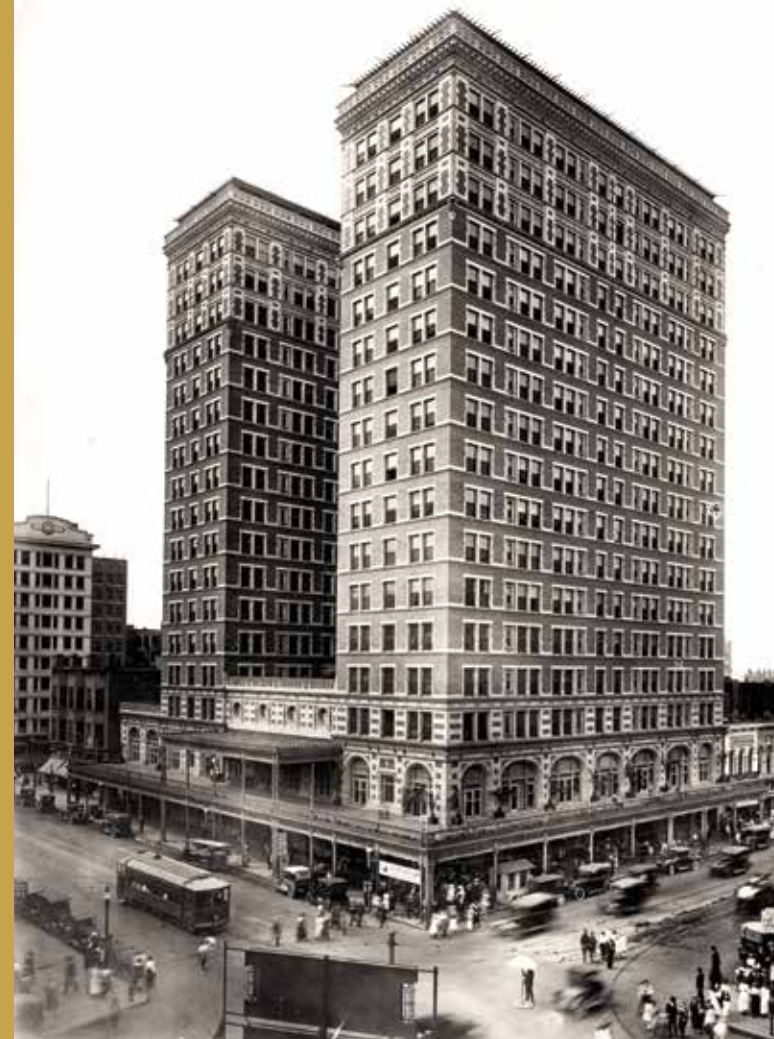


Approximately 40,000 people lived in Houston's nine square miles when Jesse Jones moved to town in 1898.

Jesse Jones had enjoyed the most accomplished artists performing in the most lavish concert halls during his trips to Europe with his Aunt Louisa and his cousins. He also attended performances when he traveled to New York and the east coast to secure financing for his building projects. He wanted the same top-quality cultural experiences for Houston, and in the early 1900s he helped bring the Metropolitan Opera and prima ballerina Anna Pavlova to town. Soon he helped convince the city government to build a new center that could accommodate an audience of thousands for performances, conventions and other large gatherings. The city leaders put Jones in charge of building the City Auditorium, which opened in 1910 and hosted everything from opera to wrestling until it was demolished in 1963 to make way for the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.

Almost immediately after the City Auditorium opened in 1910, the Russian Symphony Orchestra performed there and Jesse Jones arranged for hundreds of schoolchildren to hear them play. The sold-out performances inspired the beginnings of the Houston Symphony, whose early performances took place in Jones's ornate movie theater that he had built next to his Houston Chronicle Building.

He knew that building his business and improving his city were closely connected.



Making a bold and risky venture in the then small city, Jesse Jones built the elegant 18-floor Rice Hotel in 1913 just before the opening of the Houston Ship Channel and added a third wing in the 1920s. The hotel was Houston's social hub for decades. Jones's Houston Chronicle Building stands at the left.

Those were times of monumental change in Houston. While Jesse Jones was building the city's tallest buildings and its new Auditorium, Congressman Tom Ball was busy in Washington, D.C., convincing the United States Congress to pay half the cost of developing the Houston Ship Channel. The proposal to share costs between a municipality and the federal government for a major infrastructure project was unprecedented, but the city's civic and business leaders, including Jones, knew they had to step up: Houston's growth would be sharply limited without access to the sea. Congress agreed to the "Houston Plan," and Jones quickly persuaded his fellow bankers to join him in buying the bonds needed to pay Houston's half of the cost. Jones was appointed as the Houston Harbor Board's first chairman and oversaw the construction of the warehouses, docks and piers that would welcome the first ships that began to arrive from around the world in the Port of Houston in 1914.

At the same time, in anticipation of the Port's opening, Jones was building three more ten-floor office buildings and the 18-floor Rice Hotel. He said he was being worked "harder than the town pump," but he knew that building his business and improving his city were closely connected—only if the city prospered would he succeed. The concurrent openings of his lavish Rice Hotel and the critically important Houston Ship Channel epitomized the best of Jones's efforts to use capitalism both to improve the common good and to increase his own wealth. His success captured the attention of President Woodrow Wilson, who wanted people in his administration to invigorate the neglected southern and western United States. Like Jones, he saw government as a positive force for progress.



Jesse Jones raised Houston's half of the funds to build the Houston Ship Channel and, as the first chairman of the Houston Harbor Board, built the infrastructure that welcomed the first ships from around the world to the new Port of Houston in 1914.

Wilson invited Jones to join his administration in different capacities including as secretary of the treasury, but Jones repeatedly declined the president's requests so he could

64 *Publications called him “Big brother to four million men in khaki.”*



concentrate on building his businesses and Houston. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, however, Jones agreed to Wilson’s request that he head the Department of Military Relief (DMR), one of two major divisions of the American Red Cross; by presidential designation, the Red Cross was the official medical and disaster relief agency assigned to assist citizens and soldiers in the United States and Europe. Jones had been one of the original investors in Humble Oil Company—now ExxonMobil—and he sold his stock to finance his trips as head of the DMR and to sustain his businesses during his absence. He assigned his power of attorney to Fred Heyne, his closest associate, and moved to Washington, D.C.

Jones and the DMR recruited and trained thousands of nurses and doctors for service on Europe’s battlefields. The DMR organized ambulance networks and built field hospitals to treat the wounded, and it operated canteens throughout Europe to provide respite for exhausted soldiers. In the United States, the DMR built the nation’s first rehabilitation centers to treat disabled veterans and help soldiers return to their homes. Publications called Jones “Big brother to four million men in khaki.” He later became “big brother” to Army nurses as well when he lobbied President Wilson in 1918 to give them official military rank. Jones wrote to Wilson, “The standing of the profession of trained nurse, and particularly of the Army nurse, should be so raised, socially and otherwise, as to attract the very best class of women who go in for professional careers, such as teaching, medicine and law.” Two years later, in 1920, in addition to winning the right to vote, women for the first time were given military rank in the Army.

Jones stayed in Washington and Europe for more than two years. His business associates were anxious for him to return to Houston, but in a cable from Paris he explained,



Jesse Jones, as head of the American Red Cross’s Department of Military Relief, organized ambulance networks, built field hospitals to treat the wounded and established canteens throughout Europe to provide respite for exhausted soldiers.



Jesse Jones (*far left*) marching down Fifth Avenue with President Woodrow Wilson (*center*) during the immense American Red Cross fundraising parade on May 18, 1918.

“Work engaged in is of great importance and if people there understood and appreciated conditions in the world, feel sure no one would care to hinder efforts of anybody to do everything possible to help.... Am not willing to leave what I am doing here for a money consideration.” With the war’s end, Wilson appointed Jones as one of two delegates representing the United States at an international conference to convert the League of Red Cross Societies from loose-knit local clubs that responded only in time of war into a global relief agency that addressed calamities year-round.

Once his missions were complete, Jones returned to Houston, where he embarked on the most ambitious phase of his building career, dove into Democratic national politics and in 1920 married Mary Gibbs Jones, the ex-wife of his first cousin Will Jones, the son of M.T. and Louisa.

The newlyweds departed immediately after the ceremony for an extended honeymoon in New York City, where they indulged in their love of the performing arts. Mary wrote in her journal that in between luncheons, bridge games and car rides, they had “attended thirty-two plays, five operas, and two concerts.” Jones wrote to *Houston Chronicle* publisher M.E. Foster, “I am having a very good time, playing golf about three days a week and bridge the other three days. The nights are all filled, either with bridge or theater, and both of us will soon be in need of a rest cure.” Jones was also buying blocks of Manhattan real estate, where he would soon build skyscrapers, apartments and hotels, including the famous Mayfair House.

Back in Houston, Jones kept pushing development of Houston’s Main Street southward. On a site ten blocks



Jesse Jones captured the 1928 Democratic National Convention for Houston and built a hall to accommodate the 25,000 delegates and onlookers who came to the town of 300,000. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts now stands at this site.

*The convention put
Houston on the map
and Jesse Jones in
the spotlight.*

south of Buffalo Bayou, he opened the Metropolitan and Loew's movie palaces and the Lamar Hotel, which is where the Joneses lived for the rest of their lives. During the Metropolitan's 1926 Christmas Day opening, before the first movie began, thousands enjoyed performances by comedians and a violinist who fiddled while dancing the Charleston. From then on, the national operator, Publix Theatre Corporation, sent a new show to Houston each week to entertain audiences before the movies started, and this influx of musicians, dancers and lavish sets added yet another dimension to the performing arts in Houston.

Jesse Jones was a multi-tasker. Even as he opened Houston's fanciest theaters, its most lavish hotels and its tallest office buildings—while simultaneously operating the city's largest bank and newspaper—he put up significant buildings in New York City, Fort Worth and Dallas. On top of all that, he was the Democratic National Committee's finance chairman. Called the Democratic Party's "miracle man," he erased its persistent and debilitating debt and captured the 1928 National Convention for Houston, the first to be held in the south since before the Civil War and one of the first to be widely received over radio. The convention put Houston on the map and Jesse Jones in the spotlight.

In a matter of months, Jones built a convention hall where the Hobby Center stands today, big enough to accommodate the 25,000 conventioners who were about to pour into a town of 300,000. Instead of breaking previous convention records for ballots, speeches and fistfights, the Houston convention broke records for the number of bands that performed. While walking to the convention center, most likely from one of Jones's hotels, the visitors couldn't help but notice the soaring skyscraper under construction nearby, which stuck out in the sky above everything else. Jones's 37-floor Art Deco-style Gulf Building—now the JPMorgan Chase Building—would be Houston's tallest building until the 44-floor Humble Oil Company Building was completed in 1963.

Jesse Jones pushed development of Houston's Main Street ten blocks south of Buffalo Bayou when he opened the ornate Metropolitan and Loew's movie palaces and the Lamar Hotel, the Joneses' home for the rest of their lives.



The Gulf Building opened in August 1929, just months before the stock market crash ushered in the Great Depression. At first Houston was buffered from the worst of the catastrophe because commerce continued in oil, cotton, lumber and the Port, but by 1931 two banks were about to collapse. Jones knew if the two banks failed, banks would fall like dominoes not only in Houston, but across Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma, since small rural banks kept their reserves in those large urban banks that were teetering on the edge. So Jones called Houston's bankers and business leaders to a meeting in his office on the top floor of the Gulf Building and proposed a rescue of the two banks. He met fierce opposition from those who argued that the banks had been terribly mismanaged. After three days and nights of contentious meetings, Jones brought in Captain James A. Baker—a major stockholder in one of Houston's largest banks and the grandfather of former secretary of state James Baker—to back his rescue plan, and it prevailed. As a result of Jesse Jones's farsighted leadership, no bank in Houston failed during the Great Depression. In a letter to one of the holdouts who had finally relented, Jones wrote, "I believe that all we have done, are doing, and must continue doing, is necessary for the general welfare, and we cannot escape being our brother's keeper."

As a result of Jesse Jones's farsighted leadership, no bank in Houston failed during the Great Depression.

The 1929 Gulf Building (now the JPMorgan Chase Building) remained Houston's tallest skyscraper until the 44-floor Humble Oil Company Building opened in 1963.



Just as Jones's success with the Houston Ship Channel had caught Woodrow Wilson's attention, his success with Houston's banks appealed to President Herbert Hoover, who was fighting the nation's economic collapse primarily by promoting voluntary humanitarian action. So far, that had not worked. By 1932, 25 percent of the workforce was unemployed; gross national product had plunged by half; stocks had lost 75 percent of their value; and thousands of banks had failed with more continuing to go under. Everything rattled from all sides, and everyone was desperate and afraid. As a last-ditch effort, President Hoover established the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to provide government credit beyond what was privately available to banks, railroads and insurance companies, particularly those on the brink of bankruptcy. He hoped the RFC support would restore confidence in those institutions and halt the downward spiral. Seeing Jones's leadership in Houston, Hoover asked him to join the RFC's bipartisan board. The Joneses then moved to Washington, D.C., where they would live for the next 14 years.

President Franklin Roosevelt was elected later that year. Within five days of his 1933 inauguration, he and the United States Congress had expanded the RFC's power and soon

made Jesse Jones its chairman. New legislation allowed Jones and the RFC to purchase preferred stock in banks, supplying them with ready money to lend in hopes that doing so would get the frozen wheels of the economy to turn again. But the shell-shocked bankers hoarded the money instead. With no other option, Jones and the federal government's RFC stepped in as the lenders of last resort.

Throughout the Great Depression, Jones and the RFC judiciously loaned billions of dollars to applicants seeking help. Those loans saved homes, farms, businesses, banks and railroads. They extended aid to disaster victims. They helped develop the latest in high-speed trains and built aqueducts, tunnels and bridges. Government loans even financed the purchase of toasters, water pumps, refrigerators, radios and fans for people in rural areas after the RFC's Rural Electrification Administration brought electricity to their homes. Remarkably, these enormous efforts to build infrastructure, to nurture innovation, to boost employment and to financially rescue people and businesses during the nation's most severe economic collapse made money for the federal government and its taxpayers as the loans and the interest on them were steadily repaid.



Throughout the Great Depression and World War II, Jesse Jones was considered to be the most powerful person in the nation next to President Franklin Roosevelt.

The government's purchase of preferred stock in banks was the essential first step in this great effort to restore the economy. As Jones explained in 1936, "Rebuilding the banks was like putting a new foundation under the house. It was absolutely necessary to prevent the house from falling down." Some economists and politicians came to recognize that wisdom. The Troubled Asset Relief Program, also known as TARP, which was initiated during the recent "Great Recession" of 2008 and was a major factor in the country's recovery, was modeled on Jones's earlier "bank repair program."

"In all the U.S. today there is only one man whose power is greater: Franklin Roosevelt."

TIME MAGAZINE

By 1936, the RFC had become the world's largest bank and its biggest corporation, and Jesse Jones with steady moderation held the reins. During a national radio broadcast at a banquet in Jones's honor, Vice President John Nance Garner said about his friend and fellow Texan, "He has allocated and loaned more money to various institutions and enterprises than any other man in the history of the world." The *Saturday Evening Post* wrote about Jones, "Next to the President, no man in the Government and probably in the United States wields greater powers." Similarly, in Jones's second *Time* magazine cover story, the reporter wrote, "In all the U.S. today there is only one man whose power is greater: Franklin Roosevelt."



Susan Vaughn Clayton and Mary Gibbs Jones sold war bonds from a desk in the RFC building's lobby to their husbands, Will Clayton (left) and Jesse Jones, who brought Clayton to Washington to acquire strategic materials and minerals from around the world. The Claytons and the Joneses also played bridge together two or three times a week.

Most everyone at the time anxiously watched as war spread through Europe. Anticipating the need to join the fight, Jones and Roosevelt converted the RFC's focus from domestic economics to global defense. In 1939, 17 nations had armies larger than the forces of the United States. The German military budget was 20 times larger. Japan had 7,700 airplanes; the United States had only 2,500, and most of them were obsolete. To make matters worse, President Roosevelt's hands were tied from neutrality acts and polls that showed 80 percent of the respondents opposed participating in the European conflict unless the United States was directly attacked. So, rather than fighting with Congress and inflaming the public, President Roosevelt turned to Jones and the RFC to begin militarizing industry almost two years before the attacks on Pearl Harbor. The RFC's actions during World War II would dwarf its monumental contributions during the Great Depression.

In 1940, Jones joined President Roosevelt's cabinet as secretary of commerce, and he and the RFC began converting existing plants and building massive new ones to manufacture the airplanes, ships, tanks and trucks required to fight and win World War II. The RFC built enormous mines and processing facilities to produce

President Roosevelt turned to Jones and the RFC to begin militarizing industry almost two years before the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

steel, magnesium and aluminum, and it constructed the first tin smelter in the United States. To deny Germany access to resources and to supply the Allied Forces' war machine, Jones recruited Houstonian and fellow bridge partner Will Clayton to procure strategic materials and minerals from around the world. In addition, at almost miraculous speed, the RFC developed synthetic rubber, moving from the lab to mass production in a matter of months, just as the Japanese took over the country's main source of natural rubber in the Pacific. Without the RFC initiative to develop this vital alternative resource, the Allied Forces might have been stuck in place and unable to fight. The *New York Times* reported after the war that the synthetic rubber initiative was "exceeded in magnitude only by the atomic energy program."

Even so, the RFC's largest wartime investment was in aviation. As Jones explained to audiences during one of his many reassuring national radio addresses, "We have built and own 521 plants for the production of aircraft, aircraft engines, parts and accessories, ... ten times the value of privately owned investments in this industry."

Time magazine observed about Jones's public comments, "Not J.P. Morgan, not even Franklin Roosevelt could be of as much comfort to the public. To many a U.S. citizen, great or small, if Jesse Jones says O.K., O.K." In his years leading the RFC, almost everyone had seen him countless times in magazines, newsreels and newspapers or had heard him over the radio. Because of his record and his reassuring personality and presence, most Americans simply called him "Uncle Jess."



Jesse and Mary Gibbs Jones (left) established Houston Endowment in 1937 to improve life for the people of Houston.

When the war ended, the Joneses returned to Houston, where they focused on philanthropy, having established Houston Endowment in 1937 to improve life for the people of the city they loved and called home. After their return, they began to transfer their buildings and businesses to the foundation. Education was key to the Joneses. Mary had attended college when it was rare for women to do so, and Jesse, who had left school after the eighth grade, often said he felt handicapped by his lack of education despite his singular success. Consequently, the couple established large college scholarship programs at universities throughout Texas and made a point of dividing them equally between men and women. Even more rare for the 1940s, a time of racial segregation, the Joneses established large scholarship programs for minority students. One of the largest grants made before Jesse Jones passed away in 1956 and Mary died in 1962 went to build the Mary Gibbs Jones College at Rice University so women for the first time could live on campus.



Jesse Jones transformed the skyline as Houston's preeminent developer during the first half of the twentieth century and saw the city's population grow to over one million before he passed away in 1956.

Houston Endowment also made significant grants to almost every hospital and school in the developing Texas Medical Center, supported established and emerging arts organizations, and assisted human service agencies that helped those in need. Because of the Joneses' generosity and vision, today Houston Endowment has assets of almost \$1.7 billion and supports charitable organizations and educational institutions that perpetuate their vision of a community where the opportunity to thrive is available to all.

Other historical figures have helped define Houston, from its namesake revolutionary Sam Houston to colorful oil men to dominant political families like the Bakers, the Hobbys and the Hoggs. But Jesse Jones more than any other put a stamp on the city's physical shape as Houston's preeminent developer, the Port's early champion and the driving force behind the location of a massive petrochemical industrial

infrastructure along the Texas Gulf Coast during World War II. And much as did the prominent Texas politicians who followed in his footsteps, Jones decisively influenced national and international events and outcomes. He organized and provided life-saving medical care and humanitarian aid on Europe's battlefields and at home during World War I; he was essential to preserving capitalism during the Great Depression; and he was instrumental in ensuring Allied victory during World War II. In short, he was a pivotal and powerful force in all the major events of the first half of the twentieth century. On top of that, he built and bequeathed a substantial philanthropic foundation specifically to nurture Houston and its people. Today the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts stands as a magnificent monument and a touching reminder for all he did to improve life for everyone.



JESSE HOLMAN JONES

He was a pivotal and powerful force in all the major events of the first half of the twentieth century.



JOHN T. JONES, JR.

74



John T. Jones, Jr., was captured in North Africa during World War II and interned in P.O.W. camps in Poland and Germany.

As Houston Endowment's president, John Jones modernized the hotels and office buildings owned by the foundation, established far-reaching scholarship programs, supported the developing Texas Medical Center and played a pivotal role in Houston's comparatively peaceful racial integration.

John T. Jones, Jr., was Jesse Jones's beloved nephew. He was born in 1917, grew up in Houston and attended its public schools, then went to the New Mexico Military Institute and the University of Texas at Austin. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1941, was captured in North Africa in 1943 and was interned in P.O.W. camps in Poland and Germany. Upon receiving the shocking news of his imprisonment, his aunt Mary Gibbs Jones confided to John's mother, "I have never known Jess to go to pieces as he did.... He has talked to everyone who could have the least idea how to go about getting any information for us, and so many are working on it. I know we will hear good news soon. We must."

John was freed from the camp after the Germans surrendered, returned home to Houston and married Winifred Small, daughter of Texas state senator Clint Small. John also began working at the *Houston Chronicle*, where he participated in the operations of every department and became president of the newspaper in 1950. A *Business Week* profile about John Jones reported, "Opinions vary among long-time associates as to just when Jesse Jones, with no children of his own, decided that John was to manage the Jones affairs after him. With the characteristic lack of formalism in Jones management, there never was an official tap on the shoulder." John added during the interview, "He had been pushing more to me, and then one day he just told me he wanted me to look after things."

"Things" by then meant Houston Endowment, the philanthropic foundation that owned most of the buildings and businesses that had belonged to the Joneses, including the *Houston Chronicle*, the National Bank of Commerce and dozens of large commercial buildings in Houston, Fort Worth and New York City. As Houston Endowment's president, John Jones modernized the hotels and office buildings owned by the foundation, established far-reaching scholarship

"Mr. Jones often expressed a wish to his family and his business associates to bestow a lasting gift to the city and the people of Houston."

75

JOHN T. JONES, JR.

programs, supported the developing Texas Medical Center and played a pivotal role in Houston's comparatively peaceful racial integration. When students announced a plan to integrate Houston's lunch counters in 1960, to avoid inciting the violence and riots experienced in other cities, John agreed to not report the news in the *Houston Chronicle* and on the radio and television stations owned by the foundation, and he helped convince owners and managers of other local media outlets to do the same. He repeated the effort when the city's restaurants, theaters and hotels were first integrated. As a result, Houston's integration was by and large peacefully accomplished.

John Jones followed his Uncle Jess and Aunt Mary's lead and was determined to honor their values and wishes, especially after Jesse Jones passed away in 1956. His nephew recalled, "We had been riding around the downtown area when sight of the old [City Auditorium], looking more than a little seedy around its back door, prompted his thought." According to John, Jesse said, "We've got to do something about it."

John continued, "The trustees of Houston Endowment, including his widow, Mary Gibbs Jones, felt that they should carry on with his wish that Houston have a new concert hall." He also remembered, "Many years ago, long before his death, Mr. Jones often expressed a wish to his family and his business associates to bestow a lasting gift to the city and the people of Houston."



John T. Jones, Jr., took over management of the Jones Interests from his Uncle Jess and became publisher of the *Houston Chronicle*, president of Houston Endowment and chairman of the city's largest bank.



(l-r) CRS architect William Caudill, John T. Jones, Jr., Winifred Jones and Mayor Louie Welch examining a Jones Hall model.

On June 1, 1962, John T. Jones, Jr., and the Houston Endowment trustees went to City Hall and presented a proposal to Mayor Lewis Cutrer and the City Council, offering to build and give a performing arts center to Houston. The three-page proposal detailing the gift said in part:



John T. Jones, Jr. (right), explains a Jones Hall plan to Mayor Lewis Cutrer.

The trustees of Houston Endowment Inc. ... wish to underwrite construction costs of a new public building for the City of Houston. This building would be a gift from Houston Endowment to the people of Houston and would be for the purpose of housing certain of the performing arts and their ancillary educational and administrative activities. In accordance with the often expressed wish of the late Jesse H. Jones, co-founder of Houston Endowment with his wife, Mary Gibbs Jones, this building is to be located on that block of ground owned by the city and bounded by Texas Avenue, Louisiana Street, Capitol Avenue and Milam Street.

John Jones explained to a reporter after the presentation, “The City of Houston was good to Mr. Jones and his family and associates, but the trustees feel, too, that Mr. Jones was good for our city.” He continued, “He liked tangible things—things that you could see and feel and that would do work. So it is not unusual that what he wanted to give to his city was a building—something that people could see and touch, use and enjoy.”

Two weeks before the Jones Hall gift was proposed to the city, Houston Endowment, under John Jones’s leadership, had given a half-block of land to the Alley Theatre for its new building. The impressive results of John T. Jones, Jr.’s vision and leadership are clearly apparent today.

John Jones stepped down from Houston Endowment’s leadership in 1964, but remained in charge of the Jones Hall building project until it was complete. He developed a media conglomerate composed of radio and television stations, served on a variety of corporate and civic boards, and with Jones Hall’s opening, established the Society for the Performing Arts to ensure the hall would be fully utilized and to bring the best artists and companies from around the world to complement the music, dance and theater developing in Houston.

Despite his significant power, John Jones for the most part avoided the spotlight and preferred to spend time with his wife, Winifred, and their children, John, Melissa and Jay, at their ranch near Hempstead. John T. Jones, Jr., passed away on April 21, 1994, and shortly after that his daughter, Melissa, was elected to serve on Houston Endowment’s board of directors. Her brother Jay (Jesse H. Jones II) succeeded her after her last term ended, and he continues to provide the voice and values of his father and the Jones family to Houston Endowment and to our city.

The impressive results of John T. Jones, Jr.’s vision and leadership are clearly apparent today.



(l-r) Jesse (Jay) H. Jones II, Melissa Jones, John Clinton Jones, Winifred Jones and John T. Jones, Jr., in the Edna Saunders Green Room during Jones Hall’s opening night.



AUDREY JONES BECK



Audrey Jones Beck always said she had two sets of parents: her own and her grandparents, Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones. She spent as much time with the Joneses as she did with her parents and had her own room in her grandparents' Lamar Hotel penthouse on Main Street in the heart of downtown Houston, where she grew up.

78

Through her grandparents' examples, Audrey learned the importance of charity and the value of service.

Audrey Louise Jones was born on March 27, 1922, in Houston, to Audrey and Tilford Jones, Mary's son from her previous marriage to Jesse Jones's first cousin, William Eli Jones. However, Jesse Jones was the only grandfather Audrey ever knew, and her grandparents treated her more like a daughter than a grandchild. Audrey wrote in a high school essay, "I call him 'Bods,' and he is my grandfather. He is very tall, his complexion is ruddy, his eyes are steel blue and can either snap or twinkle; his firm mouth and the dimple in his cheek suggest neither the statesman nor the financier. He can and does talk about the things that interest me, and it always surprises me when I remember that he is held in awe by many people."

Growing up with the Joneses touched Audrey's life in many ways. She was impressed as a child when her grandfather not only knew the name of the beggar on the street, but also knew his dog's name. Audrey was even more impressed when he treated the panhandler like anyone else they met downtown as she walked along with her "Bods." Later, during Jesse Jones's 14 years of service in Washington, D.C., Audrey frequently stood in for her grandfather by christening new high-speed trains and launching warships he had financed through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). She also helped her grandmother and former first lady Edith Wilson sell war bonds in the RFC's Washington, D.C., lobby during World War II. Through her grandparents' examples, Audrey learned the importance of charity and the value of service.



Audrey and her grandfather Jesse at the Rice Hotel's Empire Room.

Audrey frequently stood in for her grandfather and christened high-speed trains and warships built by the RFC.





Newlyweds John and Audrey Beck.



John and Audrey Beck at Jones Hall's grand opening.

After Audrey graduated from The Kinkaid School in 1939, she enrolled at Mount Vernon College near Washington, D.C., and spent many evenings and weekends with her grandparents at their Shoreham Hotel apartment, sometimes going with them to the White House when her grandparents visited the Roosevelts. In 1940, Audrey transferred to The University of Texas, and one year later, she met Ensign John Beck at Corpus Christi's Naval Air Base during the opening of the Officer's Club. Eight months later, they had the first military wedding to be held at Christ Church Cathedral in Houston. As a war bride, Audrey followed her husband from assignment to assignment, then once he was released from service, the couple made their home in Houston, where John developed a booming business selling and leasing heavy construction equipment, and Audrey began studying and collecting Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings.

The couple assembled the world-renowned John A. and Audrey Jones Beck Collection.

Relying on John's business acumen and Audrey's eye and determination, the couple assembled the world-renowned John A. and Audrey Jones Beck Collection, which now hangs in the Audrey Jones Beck Building at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The collection, which contains some of the best paintings by the great artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was compiled with the intention of presenting a comprehensive survey of the period for scholars and the public to learn from and enjoy. Coincidentally, in the 1960s while Jones Hall was being built, the Becks also contributed to Houston's cultural growth when they purchased for their collection paintings by Vincent van Gogh and Henri Matisse. Then in 1966—Jones Hall's opening year—they bought Andre Derain's *The Turning Road, L'Estaque*, the artist's masterpiece, a signature work of the Fauve movement and reputedly the crown jewel of the Beck collection.



Indicative of her love and support of animals, the Houston Humane Society's Audrey Jones Beck Adoption Center is named in her honor.

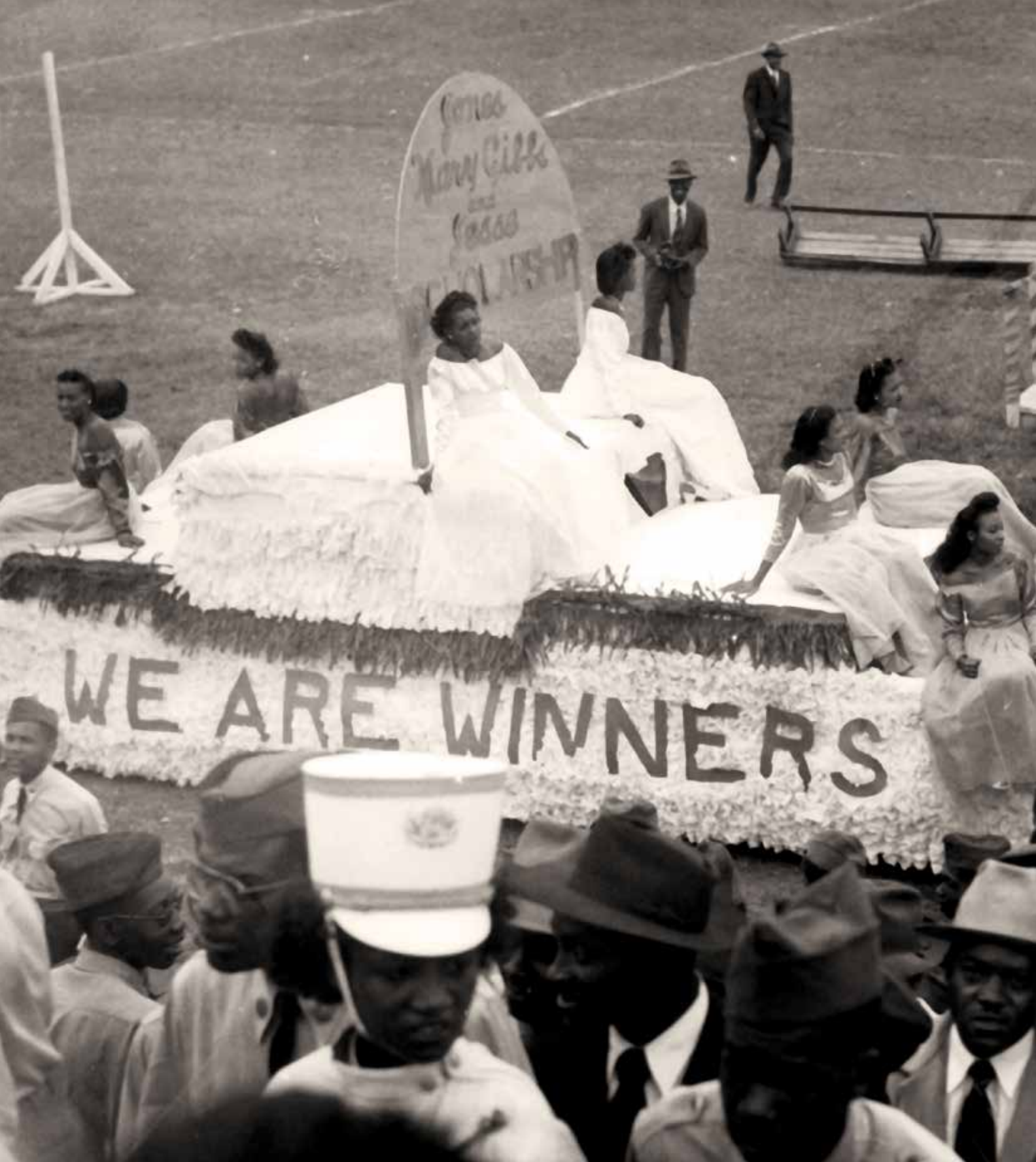


Then Houston Endowment chairman Jack Blanton and Audrey Jones Beck breaking ground for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's Audrey Jones Beck Building.

In addition to her contributions to the visual arts through the Beck Collection and as a lifetime trustee of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey also supported the city's performing arts. She was a founding trustee of Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet, and she also served as a Houston Symphony Society trustee. She understood the need for a new hall and was thrilled to help see her grandparents' dream come true. As a lifetime Houston Endowment trustee, Audrey helped transform the idea of a new performing arts center into reality, and she was front and center during the planning, construction and opening of the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.

Although her husband passed away in 1973, Audrey continued to add to the Beck Collection and purchased its last painting only months before she died on August 22, 2003. Audrey Jones Beck embodied her grandparents' spirit and exemplified their values, which found expression in the magnificent paintings in her collection; in the Houston Humane Society and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston buildings that carry her name; and in the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.

Audrey helped transform the idea of a new performing arts center into reality.



HOUSTON ENDOWMENT

During their first years of marriage in the 1920s, Jesse and Mary Gibbs Jones contributed more than \$1 million (\$16 million today) to help launch and develop institutions and organizations that would enhance Houston and improve life for its citizens. On September 25, 1937, they formalized their philanthropy and established a private foundation. Instead of naming it for themselves, the Joneses called it Houston Endowment.

83

Instead of naming it for themselves, the Joneses called it Houston Endowment.

In 1938, its first full year, Houston Endowment donated almost \$15,000, primarily to educational institutions. Jesse Jones also began giving the foundation his buildings and businesses—among them, the Rice Hotel, the *Houston Chronicle*, the Metropolitan Theater, Loew's Theater and New York's famous Mayfair House—and annual donations in the 1940s increased to more than \$200,000. These included large scholarship programs that helped send students to college—including, notably, women and minorities.

In the 1950s, as its assets and income grew from the Joneses' generosity, Houston Endowment began making larger grants. It donated \$1.5 million to the rapidly growing University of Houston for the Fred J. Heyne Building in response to the surge in Houston's population and to accommodate the increase in college attendance because of the GI Bill.

Houston Endowment has always responded to the ever-changing needs of the community it serves. The foundation helped develop the fledgling Texas Medical Center through substantial contributions for new hospitals, schools and a library, through scholarship programs to train nurses and through fellowships for

The Joneses, through Houston Endowment, established scholarship programs for men, women and minorities at universities and colleges throughout Texas, including a \$50,000 program in 1946 at Prairie View A&M University, a bold gift in light of the south's segregation.



In the 1950s Houston Endowment built the Hedgecroft Clinic to treat children with polio and later was an early supporter of AIDS service organizations.



Houston Endowment played a lead role in developing Discovery Green, an urban oasis where more than one million people each year come downtown to go outdoors.
Photograph by Katya Horner

Houston Endowment has always responded to the ever-changing needs of the community it serves.

cancer research. It responded to the 1950s polio epidemic by building the Hedgecroft Clinic to treat children who were stricken with the debilitating disease. Similarly, decades later in the early 1990s, Houston Endowment was one of the first large foundations to support AIDS service organizations when the then fatal disease first emerged and people were frightened and misinformed. To improve the health of greater Houston's residents today, the foundation funds collaborations and coalitions that increase access to primary and preventive health care, especially for children.

Since it began, the largest portion of Houston Endowment's grantmaking has supported education, at first through grants toward state-of-the-art buildings on campuses and indispensable scholarships for deserving students, then more recently to fund efforts in early education and programs that prepare students to succeed and graduate once they are enrolled in college. Through its grants to health and human service organizations over the years, the foundation has helped countless Houstonians in need develop healthy, independent and fulfilling lives. Always responsive to greater Houston's challenges, in the 1990s Houston Endowment established a new program area to preserve natural resources and cultivate healthy urban environments for residents to enjoy

as the city grew. And as the Joneses did before they established Houston Endowment, the foundation has always supported the visual and performing arts in Houston and encouraged the vitality they add to the community and to people's lives.

From the time Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet—two of Jones Hall's four original resident companies—began in the mid-1950s, Houston Endowment supported their development and helped them grow into the renowned cultural forces they are today. The Houston Symphony, already the largest and oldest performing arts organization in Houston when Jones Hall opened, first received Houston Endowment support in 1940, three years after the foundation was formed. For decades, the foundation has also helped the Society for the Performing Arts bring nationally and internationally acclaimed artists and companies to Houston as well as provide educational opportunities in the arts for young people and their families. Houston Endowment continues to provide significant support to all four of Jones Hall's original resident companies, and the foundation has helped many of Houston's emerging and established arts organizations build audiences and enrich Houston.

The arts were important to the Joneses, and they wanted children in particular to experience their power. When the Russian Symphony Orchestra came to Houston in 1911, Jesse Jones provided tickets to schoolchildren so they could see and hear a live classical music performance. Houston Endowment has continued that focus on arts and arts education for children. In addition to supporting the influential education opportunities offered by the Houston Symphony, Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet and the Society for the Performing Arts, Houston Endowment has continuously supported organizations that expand children's minds and improve their lives by exposing them to the arts. In just one example, the Houston Youth Symphony and Ballet, a grant recipient since 1949, has developed thousands of young musicians by

The foundation has always supported the visual and performing arts in Houston and encouraged the vitality they add to the community and to people's lives.



In 2012, Houston Endowment donated \$6 million toward the Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH) to increase the city's vitality by bringing arts and culture to more people.

*Houston
Endowment's
grants have
improved
life for
people and
transformed
the city.*

providing them with training under professional musicians and performance opportunities in professionally conducted concerts. The majority of students who continue with the organization's program through high school have gone on to become music majors in college.

Houston Endowment's grants have improved life for people and transformed the city. The gift of the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts and the land Houston Endowment donated for the Alley Theatre in the 1960s spurred the Theater District's development and catalyzed the performing arts in Houston. More recently, the foundation's lead grant in 2008 to develop Discovery Green turned blocks of concrete parking lots into an inviting green urban oasis with facilities and programming that encourage more than one million people each year to come downtown to go outdoors, often to enjoy a spectacular performing arts presentation. In 2012, the foundation's substantial grant to help build the Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH) brought many of Houston's innovative and alternative performing and visual artists together under one roof. Today MATCH serves as a point of entry for community artists, encourages new audiences and presents original art that feeds the cultural vigor of the city. MATCH, like Jones Hall did before, will help revitalize an entire neighborhood and create synergies among the arts. The Joneses' earlier donations and Houston Endowment's grants show how the arts can play a major role in developing the city's verve and reputation.

Since Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones established Houston Endowment in 1937, the foundation's donations have evolved to address the diverse and changing needs of the community, but its purpose remains the same: to support organizations and improve the systems that benefit the people of greater Houston. Because of their generosity and vision, Houston Endowment since its inception has contributed almost \$2 billion to help realize the Joneses' vision of a vibrant city where the opportunity to thrive is available to all.

The following have served as president of Houston Endowment since it was established in 1937: Fred J. Heyne, John T. Jones, Jr., J. Howard Creekmore, H. Joe Nelson, III, Larry Faulkner and Ann Stern.

Since 1937 Houston Endowment has made Houston a more vibrant city by supporting the arts, education, health, human services and the environment, including a \$3 million grant to the Buffalo Bayou Partnership to help transform the 160-acre Shepherd-to-Sabine stretch of Buffalo Bayou into a signature green space and recreational area.

Photograph by Tom Fox/SWA Group





With President Franklin Roosevelt and Mary Gibbs Jones in attendance, Jesse Jones was sworn in as secretary of commerce on September 19, 1940.



APPENDIX

*“It is in service
that you will grow
the greatest.”*

JESSE H. JONES

Southwestern University
commencement address

1925

CITY AUDITORIUM

1910

ARCHITECTS

Muran & Russell, St. Louis

CONTRACTOR

H. L. Stevens & Co., Chicago

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jesse H. Jones, Chairman

Mr. George P. Brown

Mr. F. C. Colby

Mr. David Daly

Mr. E. J. Hussion

Rev. W. S. Jacobs

Mr. C. G. Pilot

Mr. James A. Thompson

CITY OF HOUSTON MAYOR

Mr. H. Baldwin Rice

THE JESSE H. JONES HALL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

1966

ARCHITECTS

Caudill Rowlett Scott, Houston

GENERAL CONTRACTORS

George A. Fuller Co., Dallas

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

Walter P. Moore, Consulting, Houston

MECHANICAL-ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

Bernard Johnson Engineers, Houston

ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANTS

Bolt, Beranek and Newman Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts

THEATRE DESIGN-ENGINEERING

George C. Izenour Associates, New Haven, Connecticut

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVE FOR HOUSTON ENDOWMENT INC.

Alexander, Walton & Hatteberg, Houston

CITY OF HOUSTON MAYORS

Mr. Lewis Cutrer

Mr. Louie Welch

HOUSTON ENDOWMENT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1966

Mr. J. Howard Creekmore

PRESIDENT

Mrs. Audrey Jones Beck

Mr. John A. Beck

Mr. J. H. Garrett

Mr. W. W. Moore

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2016

Mr. David L. Mendez

CHAIR

Dr. Anne S. Chao

Mr. Anthony R. Chase

Ms. Linnet F. Deily

Mr. Douglas L. Foshee

Mr. Jesse (Jay) H. Jones II

Mr. Paul B. Murphy, Jr.

Ms. Ann B. Stern

HOUSTON SYMPHONY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1966

General Maurice S. Hirsch
PRESIDENT
Mr. Charles L. Bybee
VICE PRESIDENT AND
TREASURER
Miss Ima Hogg
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
Mr. Harmon Whittington
IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN
OF THE BOARD

Mr. J. S. Abercrombie
Mr. Kenneth S. Adams, Jr.
Mr. Albert B. Alkek
Mr. Joe Allbritton
Mr. W. Leland Anderson
Mr. Isaac Arnold, Sr.
Mr. R. W. Askanase
Mr. John F. Austin, Jr.
Col. W. B. Bates
Mrs. Claudia Bearden
Mr. Warren S. Bellows, Jr.
Mr. Warren S. Bellows, Sr.
Col. Paul G. Benedum
Mrs. Beryl Ann Bentsen
Mr. Milton S. Berman
Mrs. Ruth Bettles
Mr. J. A. Bousquet
Mrs. Betty Bowen
Mr. Isaac S. Brochstein
Mr. Samuel J. Brochstein
Mrs. Betty Brown
Mrs. Elizabeth S. H. Brown
Mr. George R. Brown
Mrs. John D. Brown
Mrs. William C. Buchanan
Mr. Thomas A. Bullock
Mrs. Vernon Burrows
Mrs. Ethel Butcher
Mr. George A. Butler
Mrs. Faith Poorman Bybee
Mrs. Katharine Calhoun
Mr. Allen H. Carruth
Mrs. Ellen Picton Chance
Mr. Benjamin Clayton

Mr. Eloise Coleman
Mr. Everett D. Collier
Mrs. George Cooper
Mrs. Mary Frances Couper
Mr. Glen R. Cramer
Mr. Roy Henry Cullen
Miss Nina Cullinan
Mrs. Florence Dean
Mr. John de Menil
Mrs. Fredrica Gross Dudley
Mrs. Elva Kalb Dumas
Mr. Granville W. Elder
Mr. J. A. Elkins, Jr.
Judge J. A. Elkins, Sr.
Mr. Robin A. Elverson
Mrs. Mary Louise Estill
Mr. Aaron J. Farfel
Mrs. Libbie Rice Farish
Mrs. Lottie Rice Farish
Mr. William S. Farish III
Mr. David Farnsworth
Mr. Wm. G. Farrington
Mrs. Sarah D. Faulkner
Mr. Sam Field
Mrs. Joan H. Fleming
Mr. Thomas Fletcher
Mr. Kenneth Franzheim, II
Mrs. Loraine Fraser
Mr. Paul M. Garmany
Mr. Alfred C. Glassell, Jr.
Dr. Richard J. Gonzalez
Mr. J. B. Greenfield
Mr. R. P. Gregory
Mrs. Esme Patterson Gunn
Mrs. Mary Haden
Mrs. Emily Haemisegger
Mr. Michel T. Halbouty
Mr. Charles W. Hamilton
Mrs. Lenore Hamman
Mr. Earl C. Hankamer
Mrs. Alice Hanszen
Mr. James W. Hargrove
Mr. Newton K. Haverstock
Mr. Erwin Heinen
Mr. J. W. Hershey
Mrs. R. E. Hibbert

Mrs. Winifred Hirsch
Mr. Henry F. Hlavaty
Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby
Mr. William P. Hobby, Jr.
Dr. Philip G. Hoffman
Mayor Roy Hofheinz
Mr. E. Leslie Hogan
Mayor Oscar F. Holcombe
Mrs. Cecile Blaffer Hudson
Mrs. Millie Hurley
Mr. Wm. Marvin Hurley
Mrs. Jeannette A. Jaworski
Mr. Leon Jaworski
Mr. C. G. Johnson
Mrs. Judi Johnson
Mr. Robert M. Johnson
Mrs. Murrell M. Johnston
Mr. Russell L. Jolley
Mrs. Nettie Jones
Mr. John T. Jones, Jr.
Mrs. Ellen E. Kelley
Mr. Robert Vernon King
Mr. Robert W. Kneebone
Mr. Neil B. Lande
Dr. H. M. Landrum
Mrs. Marion Launius
Mr. M. T. Launius, Jr.
Mr. F. M. Law
Mr. Theodore N. Law
Mrs. Virginia V. Lawhon
Mrs. Hazel G. Ledbetter
Mr. J. Hugh Liedtke
Mrs. Suzanne Levin
Mr. Max Levine
Mr. Ralph Liese
Mr. J. W. Link, Jr.
Mrs. Elva Lobit
Mrs. John F. Lynch
Mrs. Ann Lyon
Mr. John F. Maher
Mr. Lawrence E. Marcus
Mrs. Jane G. Marechal
Mrs. Carroll Masterson
Mrs. Susan Clayton McAshan
Mrs. Lucile McCleary
Mrs. Margaret Wilson McCollum

Mr. R. Thomas McDermott
Mrs. Minnette McFarland
Mr. A. G. McNeese, Jr.
Mrs. Bertha Miller
Mr. James A. Milne
Mr. John P. Mitchell
Mr. Shearn Moody, Jr.
Dr. Earl V. Moore
Mrs. Judy Moroney
Mr. T. C. Morrow
Mrs. Fae Mortimer
Mr. Robert A. Mosbacher
Mr. Joseph Mullen
Rev. John F. Murphy
Mrs. Olive Neuhaus
Mrs. Selma Neumann
Judge James L. Noel, Jr.
Mr. Immanuel Olshan
Mrs. Jane Blaffer Owen
Mr. Kenneth Dale Owen
Mr. R. Allison Parker
Dr. Kenneth S. Pitzer
Baron Enrico di Portanova
Mrs. Lillie C. di Portanova
Mrs. Sarah Reed
Mr. Carl E. Reistle, Jr.
Mrs. Mildred Sage Roach
Mr. Nelson Robinson
Mr. P. H. Robinson
Mrs. Sarah Rockwell
Mr. Bernard Sakowitz
Mr. Simon Sakowitz
Mr. Faye Sarofim
Mr. Charles A. Saunders
Dr. Hyman Schachtel
Mr. W. G. Scheibe
Mr. Pierre Schlumberger
Mr. Percy Selden
Mrs. Tina Cleveland Sharp
Mr. Lee M. Sharrar
Mrs. Katherine Sherar
Mrs. Dallas B. Sherman
Mr. Stanley W. Shipnes
Mr. Irvin M. Shlenker
Mr. Frank C. Smith
Mrs. Garnett Smith

Mr. Lloyd H. Smith
Mr. Noyes D. Smith, Jr.
Mr. R. E. Smith
Mrs. Venie Jones Smith
Mr. William A. Smith
Mr. Claude O. Stephens
Mr. Wells Stewart
Mr. John R. Sumari
Mr. Theodore E. Swigart
Mr. Gardiner H. Symonds
Mrs. Margaret Symonds
Mr. Latane Temple
Mrs. Josie Tomforde
Mrs. Phyllis Tucker
Mrs. Isla Carroll Turner
Mrs. Katherine Tyson
Mrs. Catherine Fondren Underwood
Mr. Sidney J. Wald
Mrs. Winnie Safford Wallace
Mr. Howard C. Warren
Mr. Harry C. Webb
Mr. Abe Weingarten
Mr. Marshall F. Wells
Mayor Louie Welch
Mrs. Neva West
Mr. Wesley W. West
Mr. Gail Whitcomb
Mr. John E. Whitmore
Mrs. Libby Wilkens
Mr. James o. Winston, Jr.
Mr. Benjamin N. Woodson
Mrs. Grace Woodson
Mr. Gus S. Wortham
Mrs. Lyndall Wortham
Mr. M. A. Wright
Mr. Oscar S. Wyatt, Jr.

EX-OFFICIO

Col. W. B. Bates
Mr. Warren S. Bellows, Sr.
Mr. Alfred C. Glassell, Jr.
Mr. Tom Johnson
Mr. Russell L. Jolley
Mr. Francis Marion Law
Mr. Simon Sakowitz

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2016

Mr. Bobby Tudor
CHAIRMAN
Mr. Steven P. Mach
PRESIDENT
Ms. Janet F. Clark
PRESIDENT-ELECT
Mr. Mike S. Stude
CHAIRMAN EMERITUS
Mr. Robert A. Peiser
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
Mrs. Barbara McCelvey
SECRETARY

Mr. Samuel Abraham
Mr. William Ackerman
Mr. Philip Bahr
Mrs. Janice H. Barrow
Mrs. Danielle Batchelor
Mr. Gary Beauchamp
Dr. Devinder Bhatia
Mrs. Darlene Bisso
Mr. Anthony Bohnert
Ms. Marie Taylor Bosarge
Dr. Meherwan Boyce
Ms. Nancy Shelton Bratic
Ms. Terry Brown
Mr. Ralph Burch
Ms. Barbara J. Burger
Mr. Prentiss Burt
Mr. Brett Busby
Mrs. Cheryl Byington
Mr. Andrew Calder
Mr. Dougal Cameron
Mrs. Zane Carruth
Mr. John Cater
Mrs. Donna Josey Chapman
Mr. Michael Clark
Dr. Evan Collins
Mr. Brad W. Corson
Dr. Andrew Davis
Mrs. Viviana Denechaud
Dr. Ronald DePinho
Mr. Gene Dewhurst
Mr. Tracy Dieterich

Mr. Michael Doherty
Ms. Terry Elizabeth Everett
Dr. Kelli Cohen Fein
Mr. Craig Fox
Mrs. Julia Anderson Frankel
Mr. David Frankfort
Mr. Ronald Franklin
Mr. Allen Gelwick
Mr. Stephen Glenn
Mr. Evan Glick
Mrs. Julie Gorte
Mrs. Susan Hansen
Dr. Eric Haufrect
Dr. Gary Hollingsworth
Mrs. Marianne Ivany
Mr. Brian James
Dr. Rita Justice
Mrs. Joan Kaplan
Dr. I. Ray Kirk
Mr. Ulyesse LeGrange
Dr. Rochelle Levit
Mr. Michael C. Linn
Mr. Carlos J. Lopez
Mrs. Cora Sue Mach
Dr. Michael Mann
Dr. Paul M. Mann
Mr. Rodney Margolis
Mr. Jay Marks
Mrs. Mary Lynn Marks
Mr. David Massin
Mr. John Matzer III
Mrs. Jackie Wolens Mazow
Mr. Billy McCartney
Mr. Gene McDavid
Mr. Alexander K. McLanahan
Mr. Gary Mercer
Mrs. Marilyn Miles
Mrs. Janet Moore
Mr. Paul Morico
Mrs. Bobbie Newman
Mrs. Tassie Nicandros
Mr. Scott Nyquist
Mr. Kevin O'Gorman
Mr. John Onstott
Mr. Edward Osterberg

Mr. Robert A. Peiser
Dr. Greg Powers
Mr. David Pruner
Mrs. Gloria G. Pryzant
Mr. Richard A. Rabinow
Mr. Ron Rand
Mr. Gabriel Rio
Dr. Richard Robbins
Mr. J. Hugh Roff, Jr.
Mr. John Rydman
Mr. Manolo Sanchez
Mr. Ed Schneider
Mrs. Helen Shaffer
Mr. Michael Shannon
Mrs. Donna Shen
Mr. Jerry B. Simon
Dr. Robert Sloan
Mr. Jim R. Smith
Mr. Miles O. Smith
Mr. Tad Smith
Mr. David Stanard
Mr. James Stein
Mr. David Tai
Mr. Brian J. Thomas
Mr. L. Proctor (Terry) Thomas
Mr. William Toomey, II
Mrs. Shirley W. Toomin
Mr. Andrew Truscott
Mrs. Betty Tutor
Mr. Jesse B. Tutor
Ms. Judith Vincent
Dr. Margaret Waisman
Mr. Fredric Weber
Mrs. S. Conrad Weil
Mr. Robert Weiner
Ms. Vicki West
Dr. James T. Willerson
Mrs. Margaret Alkek Williams
Mr. Steven Williams
Mr. Ed Wulfe
Mr. Scott Wulfe
Mr. David Wuthrich
Dr. Robert Yekovich
Mr. Frank Yonish

EX-OFFICIO

Ms. Audrey Chang
Ms. Darlene Clark
Mr. Adam Dinitz
Mr. Sergei Galperin
Ms. Alexandra Gottschalk
Mr. Mark C. Hanson
Mr. Brodrick W. Hill
Mr. Mark Hughes
Ms. Christine Kelly-Weaver
Mr. Andrés Orozco-Estrada
Mr. Alexandra Pruner
Dr. Ishwaria Subbiah
Mr. Art Vivar

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1966

Mr. John T. Jones, Jr.
PRESIDENT
Mrs. Ann Sakowitz
VICE PRESIDENT
Mr. Erwin Heinen
TREASURER
Mrs. Fayez Sarofim
SECRETARY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Earle S. Alexander, Jr.
Mr. Aaron J. Farfel
Gen. Maurice Hirsch
Mr. Max Levine
Mr. J. W. Link, Jr.
Mr. George A. Peterkin
Mr. Gus S. Wortham

Mrs. Lillie Frank Abercrombie
Mr. William S. Bailey
Mr. Warren Bellows
Mr. Lloyd M. Bentsen, Jr.
Mr. Milton S. Berman
Mr. William W. Bland
Mrs. Alice Pratt Brown
Mrs. Anne G. Butler
Mr. Charles L. Bybee
Mr. Steve G. Caloudas
Mr. Julius P. Carter
Mr. Charles S. Chan
Mr. Charles Crady III
Mr. Glenn R. Cramer
Miss Nina J. Cullinan
Mr. Robert M. Davant
Mrs. Frederica Dudley
Mr. J. A. Elkins, Jr.
Mr. George Fuermann
Mr. Alfred C. Glassell, Jr.
Mr. Richard J. Gonzalez
Mr. Aron S. Gordon
Mr. John H. Hackney
Mr. Walter F. Hackney
Mr. Michel T. Halbouty

Mr. Earl C. Hankamer
Mr. Jack Harris
Mr. John H. Heinzerling
Mr. J. W. Hershey
Dr. Phillip G. Hoffman
Miss Ima Hogg
Mr. Leon Jaworski
Mrs. Vivian Kuntz Jones
Mr. Theodore Law
Mrs. Elva C. Lobit
Mr. Lawrence Marcus
Mr. Ralph McCullough
Mr. James A. Milne
Mr. Robert E. Moroney
Mr. S. I. Morris, Jr.
Mr. Wright Morrow
Rev. John F. Murphy
Mrs. Barbara Robinson Owsley
Mrs. Gwendolyn Bennett Pappas

Mr. John H. Peck, Jr.
Mr. William M. Pena
Dr. Joseph A. Pierce
Mr. Roger Rasbach
Mr. James C. Richdale, Jr.
Dr. Hampton C. Robinson
Mr. Edward Rotan
Mr. Clive J. Runnells
Mr. I. J. Saccomanno
Mr. Charles Sapp
Mr. Eddy C. Scurlock
Mr. Dudley C. Sharp
Mr. R. E. Smith
Mr. John C. Stetson
Mr. Henry J. N. Taub
Mr. Howard T. Tellepsen
Mr. William E. Walbridge
Mrs. Winifred Wallace
Mr. Frank E. Warren
Mrs. Carter Wesley
Mrs. Neva Watkins West
Mr. Gail Whitcomb
Mr. James O. Winston, Jr.
Mr. B. N. Woodson
Mr. O. S. Wyatt, Jr.

EX-OFFICIO

Mr. Francis R. Deering,
City of Houston Civic Center
Mr. Walter Herbert,
Houston Grand Opera
Mr. Tom Johnson,
Houston Symphony
Mr. William McKelvey Martin,
SPA Manager
Ms. Nina Popova,
Houston Ballet
Ms. Nina Vance,
Alley Theatre

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2016-17

Mrs. Theresa A. Einhorn
BOARD CHAIR
Mr. Willie C.W. Chiang
VICE BOARD CHAIR
Mr. G. Mark Jodon
SECRETARY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mrs. Norah Adams
Mr. Victor Bhatt
Ms. Chree Boydston
Mr. Charles D. Davidson
Mr. Miguel Espinosa
Ms. Melanie Gray
Mr. Jonathan Homeyer
Mr. Curtis Karges
Mr. Samir Khushalani
Mr. Stephen A. Lasher
Mrs. Eileen Lawal
Mrs. Theresa Mallett
Mrs. Ginni Mithoff
Mr. Christopher O'Hara
Mr. James J. Postl
Ms. Ann V. Rogers
Ms. Melanie B. Rother
Mrs. Gloria Ryan
Mr. H. Michael Sultanik
Mr. H. William Swanstrom
Mr. Timothy G. Taylor
Mrs. Patricia D. Tilton
Mr. Tymothi O. Tombar
Mr. Stephen M. Trauber
Mr. Robert B. Tudor III
Mr. Marcus A. Watts

Mr. Stephen Baird
Ms. Linda Bertman
Mrs. Pat Burns
Ms. Dona Chambers
Mr. Richard E. Chandler, Jr.
Mr. Robert K. Devlin
Ms. Gigi Huang
Mrs. Shawn K. Jackson
Mrs. Emily T. Kuo
Mr. Jack Lapin
Ms. Marian Lloyd
Mrs. Soraya McClelland
Mr. Mehmet F. Muftuoglu
Mrs. Katherine E. Murphy
Mrs. Michaelene Lusk Norton
Mrs. Nichole Pruitt
Mr. Nick Rasmussen
Mrs. Leslie Elkins Sasser
Mr. Wayne D. Stinnett, Jr.
Mrs. Krstina Trauger
Mrs. Margaret Alkek Williams

HOUSTON BALLET

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1967

Mr. McClelland Wallace
CHAIRMAN
Mrs. Robert M. Davant, Jr.
PRESIDENT

Mrs. John T. Jones, Jr.
VICE PRESIDENT
Mr. Sanford E. McCormick
VICE PRESIDENT
Mr. Dossett McCullough
VICE PRESIDENT

Mrs. Henry Gates Safford
VICE PRESIDENT

Mrs. Bernard Sakowitz
VICE PRESIDENT

Mrs. Macrery B. Wheeler, Jr.
SECRETARY

Mr. James L. Read
TREASURER

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Miss Nina J. Cullinan
Mr. Whitfield Marshall
Mrs. Fayez Sarofim

Mrs. W. Leland Anderson
Dr. Joseph M. Barnhart
Miss Harriet Bath
Mrs. Audrey Jones Beck

Mrs. John H. Blaffer
Mr. Preston M. Bolton
Mrs. Shirley S. Bowen
Mr. Hamilton Brown

Mr. Herbert L. Dillon, Jr.
Mrs. John Dorrance
Mrs. William S. Farish
Mr. Robert L. Gerry III

Miss Lila Gordon
Mr. Peter Guenther
Mrs. Emily Haemisegger
Mr. William P. Hobby, Jr.

Mrs. John G. Hull
Mr. Andrew Jitkoff
Mrs. Andrew Jitkoff
Mrs. Lawrence E. Kelly

Mrs. James W. McBride
Mr. Robert Moroney
Mrs. Robert Moroney
Mrs. Joseph R. Neuhaus

Mr. Alvin M. Owsley, Jr.
Mrs. Charles A. Perlitz, Jr.
Mrs. James D. Randall
Mrs. Natasha Rawson

Mrs. Dudley C. Sharp
Mrs. Lloyd H. Smith
Mrs. McClelland Wallace
Mr. F. Carrington Weems

Mr. Robert H. Wilson, Jr.
Mrs. Andrew Jackson Wray

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2016

Mrs. Phoebe Tudor
CHAIRMAN
Mrs. Allison Thacker
PRESIDENT

Mrs. Margaret Alkek Williams
SECRETARY
Mrs. Henry S. May, Jr.
VICE PRESIDENT

Mr. James M. Nicklos
VICE PRESIDENT
Mr. James J. Parr
VICE PRESIDENT

Mrs. Leigh M. Smith
VICE PRESIDENT
Ms. S. Shawn Stephens
VICE PRESIDENT

Mr. Nicholas L. Swyka
VICE PRESIDENT
Mrs. Becca Cason Thrash
VICE PRESIDENT

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Mrs. F. T. Barr
Mrs. Kristy J. Bradshaw
Mrs. Cecilia J. Campbell
Mrs. Albert Y. Chao

Mrs. Gillian Hobson
Mr. Jesse H. Jones II
Mr. James M. Jordan
Mrs. Russell C. Joseph

Mr. Richard K. McGee
Mrs. Michael Mithoff
Mr. Michael S. Parmet
Mrs. Carroll Robertson Ray

Mr. Marcus A. Watts
Mrs. Lynn Wyatt

Mr. Cecil H. Arnim III
Mrs. Isaac Arnold, Jr.
Mr. Philip A. Bahr
Mrs. Brenda W. Bazan

Mrs. Diane Bazelides
Mr. Gary V. Beauchamp
Mrs. Gina Bhatia
Mr. John A. Blaisdell

Mrs. Leslie D. Blanton
Mr. Tony Bradfield
Mrs. Daniel A. Breen
Mrs. Wendy Wilkins Burks

Mr. Richard L. Burleson
Mr. Tripp Carter
Mrs. Keiko Chevray
Ms. Janet Coy

Mr. James W. Crownover
Mrs. James W. Crownover
Mrs. Heidi Cruz
Mrs. Harry H. Cullen

Mrs. Lilly L. Cullen
Ms. Sasha Davis
Mr. Bastiaan de Zeeuw
Ms. Jane DiPaolo

Ms. Pamela D. Earthman
Mrs. Donald L. Erskine
Mrs. Richard E. Fant
Dr. Kelli Cohen Fein

Mr. Charles C. Foster
Mrs. James E. Furr
Mr. Mitchell George
Mrs. Sandra S. Godfrey

Mrs. Donald M. Graubart
Mrs. Jennifer Gravenor
Ms. Patricia B. Green
Mr. Joseph A. Hafner, Jr.

Mrs. Theodore J. Haywood
Mr. William James Hill
Mr. Brian B. Hughes
Dr. Dale G. Konicek

Ms. Melanie Lawson

Dr. Bridgitte Shen Lee
Mr. E. Daniel Leightman
Ms. Tracy N. LeRoy
Mrs. Elizabeth Leykum

Mr. Mark Loveland
Ms. Leticia Loya
Mrs. Kelley S. Lubanko
Mrs. Harry E. Mach

Mrs. Steve P. Mach
Mr. Bradley H. Marks
Mr. Jerry Martin
Mr. Daniel M. McClure

Mrs. J. Luke McConn III
Mrs. Joseph D. McCord
Mrs. Ginni Mithoff
Mrs. Marsha L. Montemayor

Ms. Nancy Powell Moore
Ms. Beth Muecke
Mrs. Patti Murphy
Dr. Duyen Huynh Nguyen

Dr. Dana Ondrias
Mrs. Dee S. Osborne
Mr. Gene J. Oshman
Mrs. Cabrina Owsley

Mr. Colin Parfitt
Mr. Robert F. Parker
Mrs. Amy Pincu
Mr. David M. Pincus

Mrs. Elisa Stude Pye
Mrs. Harry M. Reasoner
Mr. Henry Richardson
Ms. Martha E. Rocks

Mrs. Akemi Saitoh
Mrs. Fayez Sarofim
Mrs. Lance Smith
Mr. Karl S. Stern

Mrs. Ann Trammell
Dr. Kevin E. Varner
Mr. Alastair J. M. Walton
Mrs. Nicholas J. Zdeblick

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1966

Mr. Marshall F. Wells
CHAIRMAN
Mr. John H. Heinzerling
PRESIDENT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Roy Allison
Mr. William B. Black, Jr.
Mr. William W. Bland
Mr. William B. Cassin
Mrs. William B. Cassin
Mrs. Roy D. Demme
Mr. Erwin Heimen
Mrs. Dudley E. Hotchkiss
Mrs. Gainer B. Jones
Mrs. John L. Mortimer
Mrs. James B. Sampson
Mrs. Allan J. Tomlinson

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE
Mr. Thomas D. Anderson
Mr. Edward Bing
Mrs. R. R. Dean
Dr. Richard J. Gonzalez
General Maurice Hirsch
Mrs. Louis G. Lobit

Mr. Thomas E. Alexander
Mr. Clay Bailey
Dr. H. L. Barlett
Mr. Jack Beasley
Mrs. William W. Bland
Judge John R. Brown
Mrs. William Childs
Mr. Fred Couper
Mrs. Benjamin Danziger
Mrs. John A. Daugherty
Mrs. Ray L. Dudley
Mr. Clarence Eastham
Mrs. James N. Erwin
Mr. Lloyd Fadrique
Mr. Aaron J. Farfel
Mrs. William G. Farrington
Mrs. Jack Finkelstein
Mr. Robert J. Fitzpatrick
Mrs. E. J. Flake
Mr. Thomas Fletcher, Sr.
Mrs. H. Fort Flowers
Miss Mary F. Fuller
Mrs. Alex W. Galbraith
Mrs. Ralph Ellis Gunn
Mrs. Edgar Haden
Mr. Michel T. Halbouty
Mrs. Hilton Hearn
Mrs. L. E. Heinen
Mrs. Robert R. Herring
Mrs. William P. Hobby, Jr.
Mr. Dudley E. Hotchkiss
Mr. G. W. (Mike) Hunt

Mrs. J. R. Imber
Mr. James E. Ivins
Mr. Joseph Javor
Mr. Nelson Jones
Mrs. Wayne V. Jones
Mrs. R. B. Kahle
Mr. Leo Linbeck, Sr.
Dr. Alma Lowe
Mr. John F. Lynch
Mrs. Harris Masterson III
Mrs. William H. McKelvy
Mrs. C. T. McMains
Mr. James A. Milne
Mrs. Denman Moody
Mr. Shearn Moody
Mr. Robert E. Moroney
Mr. Martin Moser
Mrs. Hugo V. Neuhaus, Jr.
Dr. Alfred R. Neumann
Mrs. John C. O'Leary
Mrs. Frank Reese
Mr. Amos A. Roberts
Mrs. Fayez Sarofim
Mrs. Eddy Scurlock
Mr. Stanley W. Shipnes
Mrs. Bernard Sines
Mrs. Champney F. Smith
Mrs. Joseph S. Smith
Mr. Orrien R. Smith
Mrs. Wendell B. Steward
Mrs. Robert Thomas
Mr. Garrett R. Tucker, Jr.
Mr. Wilard Walbridge
Mr. Howard Warren
Mrs. Wesley West
Mrs. James W. Williams
Mrs. O. R. Winter
Mr. John Winterbotham
Mrs. Gus S. Wortham
Mrs. Newton Wray

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2016

Mr. James W. Crownover
CHAIRMAN
Mrs. Lynn Wyatt
VICE CHAIRMAN
Dr. John Mendelsohn
SENIOR CHAIRMAN
Ms. Beth Madison
CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Mr. Richard E. Agee
Mrs. Robin Angly
Mr. John S. Arnoldy
Ms. Marcia Backus
Mr. Philip A. Bahr
Ms. Michelle Beale
Mr. Astley Blair
Mrs. Pat Breen
Mrs. Janet Langford Carrig
Mrs. Zane Carruth
Mrs. Anna Catalano
Mr. Albert Chao
Mrs. Donna P. Josey Chapman
Mr. N. A. (Neil) Chapman
Mrs. Bobbie-Vee Cooney
Mr. Albert O. Cornelison Jr.
Mr. Dan Domeracki
Mr. David B. Duthu
Dr. Larry Faulkner
Mr. Benjamin Fink
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz
Mr. Robert C. Hunter
Mr. Alfred W. Lasher III
Mr. Perryn Leech
Mrs. Claire Liu
Mr. Richard A. Lydecker, Jr.
Mrs. Frances Marzio
Mrs. Brucie Moore
Mrs. Sara Morgan
Ms. Terrylin G. Neale
Ms. Franci Neely
Mr. Ward Pennebaker
Mrs. Cynthia Petrello
Ms. Gloria Portela

Mr. David Powell
Mr. Allyn Risley
Mr. Glen A. Rosenbaum
Dr. Jack A. Roth
Mr. Mark R. Spradling
Mr. Harlan C. Stai
Mr. Patrick Summers
Mr. Ignacio Torras
Mr. John G. Turner
Mrs. Margaret Alkek Williams

Mr. Samuel Ramey
HONORARY DIRECTOR
Ms. Frederica von Stade
HONORARY DIRECTOR

TRUSTEES

Mr. Samuel Abraham
Mr. Gary Adams
Mrs. Anthony G. Aiuvalasit
Mr. Thomas Ajamie
Mr. Edward H. Andrews III
Mr. Christos Angelides
Judge Mary E. Bacon
Mrs. Denise Bush Bahr
Mr. C. Mark Baker
Dr. Saúl Balagura
Mr. Jonathan Baliff
Dr. Barbara Lee Bass
Mr. Martin D. Beirne
Mrs. Judith A. Belanger
Ms. Linda Bertman
Dr. Michael Bloome
Ms. Adrienne Bond
Ms. Nana Booker
Ms. Margaret Anne Boulware
Mr. Tony Bradfield
Mr. Walter Bratic
Dr. Janet M. Bruner
Mrs. Melinda Brunger
Mr. Ralph Burch
Ms. Gwyneth Campbell
Mrs. Marjorie H. Capshaw
Mrs. Sylvia J. Carroll
Mr. Thierry Caruso

Mr. Joseph Carvelli
Judge Theresa Chang
Mr. Anthony Chapman
Mrs. Mathilda Cochran
Mrs. Estela Cockrell
Mr. William E. Colburn
Mrs. Christa M. Cooper
Ms. Sarah Cooper
Mr. Efrain Z. Corzo
Mrs. Catherine Crath
Mrs. Mary Davenport
Mr. Joshua Davidson
Mr. Darrin Davis
Mrs. Sasha Davis
Ms. June Deadrick
Mr. Tracy Dieterich
Mr. Gislar R. Donnenberg
Mr. David Dorenfeld
Mrs. Connie Dyer
Mr. Brad Eastman
Ms. Barbara Eaves
Dr. Warren A. Ellsworth, IV
Mr. Mark Evans
Mr. Richard E. Evans
Dr. Mauro Ferrari
Ms. Carol Sue Finkelstein
Mr. Richard Flowers
Ms. Patricia B. Freeman
Ms. Carolyn Galfione
Mrs. Sandra S. Godfrey
Ms. Michaela Greenan
Mr. Fred Griffin
Mr. John S. Griffin
Mr. William Griffin
Mrs. Lynn Guggolz
Mr. Claudio Gutierrez
Mr. A. John Harper III
Mrs. Brenda Harvey-Traylor
Mrs. Nancy Haywood
Mr. Michael Heckman
Mr. Robert C. Hewell
Mr. Jackson D. Hicks
Mr. Todd Hoffman
Dr. Gary L. Hollingsworth
Mrs. Eileen Hricik

Ms. Lee M. Huber
Mr. Richard Hussein
Ms. Joan B. Johnson
Ms. Carey C. Jordan
Ms. Marianne Kah
Mr. Stephen M. Kaufman
Mr. John Keville
Mrs. Yolanda Knoll
Ms. Claudia Kreisle
Mrs. Connie Kwan-Wong
Ms. Michele LaNoue
U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee
Mrs. Marcheta Leighton-Beasley
Dr. Mike Lemanski
Mr. David LePori
Ms. Carolyn J. Levy
Mr. Kevin Lipson
Mrs. Heide Loos
Mr. Gabriel Loperena
Dr. Jo Wilkinson Lyday
Ms. Andrea Maher
Mr. Michael Malbin
Ms. Michele Malloy
Ms. Ginger Maughs
Mr. R. Davis Maxey
Mrs. Alexander K. McLanahan
Mr. Robert C. McNair
Ms. Ginger C. Menown
Miss Catherine Jane Merchant
Mr. Jerry Metcalf
Mr. Mark Metts
Mr. Christopher B. Miller
Mrs. Alexandra Mitch
Mr. Sid Moorhead
Mr. Frank Neukomm
Mrs. Charlene Nickson
Mrs. Beverly Ogilvie
Mr. John B. Onstott
Mrs. Maria Papadopoulos
Mrs. Marion Roose Pullin
Mr. Gary Reese
Mr. Todd Reppert
Mrs. Jill Risley
Mr. David Rowan
Mrs. Jean B. Rowley

Mr. Thomas Rushing
Mrs. Nan Schissler
Mrs. Helen Shaffer
Ms. Denmon Sigler
Mrs. Hinda Simon
Ms. Janet Sims
Mrs. Kristina Hornberger Somerville
Dr. C. Richard Stasney
Dr. Ishwaria Subbiah
Mrs. Rhonda Sweeney
Mrs. Becca Cason Thrash
Dr. John F. Thrash
Mrs. Betty Tutor
Mrs. Sheila Tweed
Ms. Birgitt van Wijk
Mr. De la Rey Venter
Mr. Alfredo Vilas
Mrs. Marietta Voglis
Mr. Bob Wakefield
Mr. Alastair J. M. Walton
Ms. Beth Williams
Mrs. Margarida Williamson
Mrs. Elsa Wolf
Mr. R. Alan York
Mr. David P. Young



FRIENDS OF JONES HALL

PAST BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Earle S. Alexander
FOUNDING CO-PRESIDENT
Mr. J. Kent Friedman
FOUNDING CO-PRESIDENT
Mr. Stephen A. Lasher
PAST PRESIDENT
Mr. Robert A. Peiser
PAST PRESIDENT

Mr. John Cater
Mr. James V. Derrick
Mr. Miguel Espinosa
Mr. Rodney Margolis
Mr. William Merchant
Ms. Katherine T. Mize
Mr. L.P. Thomas

EX-OFFICIO
Ms. Ann Kennedy
Mr. Hoyt T. Mattox
Mr. Matthew Van Besien
Mr. David Wax
Ms. Georgiana Young

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2016

Mr. James J. Postl
PRESIDENT

Judge Brett Busby
Ms. Janet F. Clark
Mr. Charles D. Davidson
Ms. Melanie Gray
Ms. Barbara McCelvey

EX-OFFICIO
Ms. June Christensen,
Society for the Performing Arts
Mr. Mark C. Hanson,
Houston Symphony

Friends of Jones Hall maintains and advances the excellence of Jones Hall as a premier performing arts destination for the people of Houston. Friends of Jones Hall was established in 1988 as a nonprofit collaborative between the Houston Symphony and the Society for the Performing Arts, Jones Hall’s resident companies. In conjunction with Houston First—a local government corporation that manages Houston’s arts and convention facilities—Friends of Jones Hall has initiated, managed and completed critical and substantial improvements to the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.

The Friends’ first major renovations occurred in the early 1990s when it improved the Hall’s acoustics for classical and amplified performances; replaced all of its seats; renovated the box office; upgraded the lighting, computer and sound systems; refinished the teak walls; painted public areas; doubled the number of restrooms; and renovated the Edna Saunders Green Room. Working in partnership with the City of Houston, Friends of Jones Hall assumed leadership for Jones Hall’s reconstruction after Tropical Storm Allison’s devastating flood, an enormous task that was accomplished in record time.

The effort to maintain and improve Jones Hall is ongoing. Friends of Jones Hall will soon significantly renew the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts—one of Houston’s most important landmark buildings—so for the next 50 years it can continue to provide remarkable experiences that generations will cherish for years to come.

Remarkable Experiences

was published by Friends of Jones Hall.

Written and produced by Steven Fenberg

Designed by CORE Design Studio

Proofread by Polly Koch

Steven Fenberg was archivist and historian at Houston Endowment from 1993 to 1999 and served as community affairs officer until 2013. He was the executive producer and writer of *Brother, Can You Spare a Billion? The Story of Jesse H. Jones*, an Emmy award-winning documentary that was narrated by Walter Cronkite and broadcast nationally on PBS, and he wrote *Unprecedented Power: Jesse Jones, Capitalism and the Common Good*, an award-winning biography published by Texas A&M University Press.

(frontispiece and page 4) Photographs by Jeff Fitlow.
(inside back cover) The Houston Symphony’s 2016 world premiere of *The Cosmos*.
Photograph by Anthony Rathbun.

Unless otherwise indicated, most images are from Jones Hall’s four original resident companies, Houston Endowment, and the Jesse H. Jones and Ann Holmes archives at Rice University’s Woodson Research Center.



