



Constance Werner Ramirez

A PIONEER IN PRESERVATION



Constance Werner Ramirez's association with Historic Annapolis dates to the late 1950s when, as a high school student, she became one of HA's first Junior Guides. It was then that she developed a love for Annapolis's historic architecture, "the alleys and charming narrow spaces," and social histories— "stories of the people who are attached to these spaces." Six years later, after graduating from Wheaton College, in Massachusetts, she served as the Assistant to the Director of HA for Architectural Research to document buildings around City Dock. She subsequently earned a master's degree at Yale University and a PhD in City and Regional Planning from Cornell University.

Connie developed a love for teaching as a teaching assistant while earning her doctorate. She first taught summer school sessions and, later, workshops through the Preservation Resource Group, which she co-founded, the Smithsonian Associates, and various historic preservation organizations. Building on these experiences, she taught

preservation courses at the universities of Virginia, George Washington, George Mason, and Maryland. For thirty-five years, she taught graduate level courses while working for the Federal government. Connie formally retired from her teaching at the University of Maryland last year.

Throughout her federal career, Connie held senior cultural resource management positions for the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, and the Department of Army where she wrote historic preservation regulations and technical guidance on managing historic and archaeological places on Army bases. For the Department of Defense, she directed projects that varied from national programs that concentrated on Native American resources and archaeology records to smaller ones, including the restoration of the Band Barracks at Fort Sam Houston and the relocation of a historic roadhouse in Alaska from a military training area to a nearby town. "It was important to me," she says, "that I was able to direct DoD funds to national research laboratories so they would apply their research to historic preservation issues."

Perhaps her greatest contribution to the field is the establishment of the National Preservation Institute (NPI) in 1980. Years as a student and as a teacher "gave me more exposure to pedagogy and to the value of a broad education in the field of historic preservation." This

interest, along with her extensive professional experience and network, helped build the Institute, currently in its 40th year. Today, dozens of Professional Training Seminars in Historic Preservation & Cultural Resource Management are taught through NPI, by professionals, for professionals.

Looking forward, she believes the concept of preservation has taken hold broadly in the United States. "We now see interest in all kinds of cultural history; buildings, landscapes, objects, communities. The emphasis is more on the stories associated with a place... [but]... we still need to be stewards and conservators of physical places." To that point, she is a strong advocate for hands-on training programs of traditional skills and knowledge, and associated research on best practices.

Over the years she has served on several boards and volunteered for numerous local and academic organizations and committees, including the Annapolis Heritage Commission and the West Annapolis Heritage Association. Currently she serves as the President of the Chase Home Board of Trustees, which manages the Chase-Lloyd House. "Now I'm helping to preserve the house that I loved when I was a Junior Guide for Historic Annapolis - sixty-four years ago." We are most honored to recognize Connie's long-standing service with a 2020 HA Preservation Award.

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