

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Allen Wise, President
Linda Y. Jackson, President-Elect
Melissa Berry, Vice President
Lori Martin, Vice President
Christina Randle, Secretary
Clay Cary, Treasurer
Clayton Bullock, Immediate Past
President

DIRECTORS

Melissa Alaya
Katie Carmichael
Miriam Conner
Richard Craig
Sareta Davis
Harmony Grogan
Stacey Kaleh
Ju Yung Kim

Richard Kooris
Perry Lorenz
Kelley Cooper McClure
Alyson McGee
Elisha Perez
Mueni Rudd
Shubhada Saxena
Michael Strutt

2020-2021 REPRESENTATIVES

Charles Peveto, Austin History Center Association
Bob Ward, Travis County Historical Commission

ADVISOR

Cyndee Lake

STAFF

Lindsey Derrington, Executive Director
Meghan King, Programs and Outreach Planner
Lesley Walker, Development and Grants Coordinator

September 13, 2021

Bob Brinkman
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX
78711

Dear Mr. Brinkman,

Preservation Austin exists to empower Austinites to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and meaningful community culture through preservation. We write to you today in support of the Friends of Wooldridge Square's request for a new historic marker for Wooldridge Park, a City of Austin park. The site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is a designated State Antiquities Landmark, a City of Austin Historic Landmark, and was recently designated a Lone Star Legacy Park by the Texas Recreation and Parks Society. The current historic marker was administered by the Texas Historical Commission in 1971 and only accounts for the site's early history. We support an updated marker that interprets the rich and diverse history of one of Austin's most significant cultural landscapes in accordance with contemporary preservation values.

Wooldridge Square was one of the four original squares from the 1839 Edwin Waller Plan of Austin, three of which remain today—Wooldridge Square, Brush Square, and Republic Square. Wooldridge was redeveloped by Mayor A.P. Wooldridge in 1909 as part of the nationwide "City Beautiful" movement that flourished between the 1890s to the 1920s. Local architect Charles Henry Page worked with Mayor Wooldridge on the plan of the square, including the architecturally significant Wooldridge Bandstand/Pergola.

A natural site of gathering and oration, Wooldridge Park has a notable history of political and community activity that occurred there following its redevelopment in 1910. In 1911, Booker T. Washington addressed a crowd of 5,000 here after he was disallowed from speaking from the capitol. The square became a customary spot for many local and state politicians to launch their political campaigns to great fanfare, including that of Lyndon B. Johnson, who announced his bid for the US Senate here in 1948 before going on to become the 36th President of the United States. The square was also the site of rallies in support of women's suffrage and frequently hosted musical performances throughout the twentieth century.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Allen Wise, President
Linda Y. Jackson, President-Elect
Melissa Berry, Vice President
Lori Martin, Vice President
Christina Randle, Secretary
Clay Cary, Treasurer
Clayton Bullock, Immediate Past
President

DIRECTORS

Melissa Alaya
Katie Carmichael
Miriam Conner
Richard Craig
Sareta Davis
Harmony Grogan
Stacey Kaleh
Ju Yung Kim

Richard Kooris
Perry Lorenz
Kelley Cooper McClure
Alyson McGee
Elisha Perez
Mueni Rudd
Shubhada Saxena
Michael Strutt

2020-2021 REPRESENTATIVES

Charles Peveto, Austin History Center Association
Bob Ward, Travis County Historical Commission

ADVISOR

Cyndee Lake

STAFF

Lindsey Derrington, Executive Director
Meghan King, Programs and Outreach Planner
Lesley Walker, Development and Grants Coordinator

This history is just a brief account of the significant activities that have occurred at Wooldridge Park. Updating the historic marker to reflect this important history is aligned with Preservation Austin's advocacy priority to identify sites reflecting underrepresented and under-told heritage in order to better tell the full story of Austin's rich and diverse history.

We thank you for the important work you do to protect Texas's historic resources.

Allen Wise, President