

## **The Fielder Flash**

Arlington Historical Society  
August 2024 Newsletter



### **Our Venues**

**Fielder Museum** | 1616 W. Abram Street  
**Knapp Heritage Park** | 201 W. Front Street  
**Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds** | 600 W. Arkansas Lane

### **Contact Us**

**Email:** [fielderh@swbell.net](mailto:fielderh@swbell.net)  
**Website:** [www.arlingtontxhistory.org](http://www.arlingtontxhistory.org)  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/FielderHouseMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/FielderHouseMuseum)  
**Phone:** 817-460-4001

### **A note from the editor**



This month's newsletter features your official invitation to Knapp Heritage Park's 20th Anniversary! We're excited about this event and hope to see you there. We also have an article about Tillie Burgin of Mission Arlington, a tribute to Officer Craig Hanking, and a recap of the Caravan Court Hotel groundbreaking ceremony. Visit Fielder Museum's fossil exhibit if you haven't yet, and as always, we appreciate your support on North Texas Giving Day.

### **Jason S. Sullivan, 08-31-24**

Newsletter Editor

[JasonSSullivan@gmail.com](mailto:JasonSSullivan@gmail.com)

### **Upcoming Events**

- **September 19**—North Texas Giving Day (donate 9/1 through 9/19)
- **September 19**—Texas Authors Book Club, Fielder Museum, 6:30 PM
- **September 22**—AHS Board Meeting, Fielder Museum, 2:00 PM
- **September 28**—Knapp Heritage Park 20th Anniversary Celebration, 10:00 AM-5:00 PM
- **October 17**—Texas Authors Book Club, Fielder Museum, 6:30 PM
- **October 27**— Last day for "The Seashores of Ancient Arlington: A Rich Fossil Record" exhibit at Fielder Museum || **Extended due to popular demand!**

### **Knapp Heritage Park 20th Anniversary**

You're invited to a very special event! Come out to Knapp Heritage Park on **Saturday, September 28th**, to help us celebrate the park's 20th anniversary. This event is free and open to the public. Whether you're a regular or have never visited, this event will be a great opportunity to see the cabins and help us celebrate an important part of Arlington's rich history.

Dedicated in 2004, Knapp Heritage Park is a unique place in our community. It offers the opportunity to visit some of Arlington's oldest structures and experience pioneer life. With its landscaped grounds and rustic green space, Knapp combines history and community spirit in the heart of Downtown Arlington. The 20th Anniversary is a special milestone for us!

#### **Event details**

**Event:** Knapp Heritage Park 20th Anniversary  
**Address:** 201 W. Front Street, Downtown Arlington  
**Date:** Saturday, September 28th  
**Time:** 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

**What's planned:** Activities, demonstrations, vendors, entertainment, tours, food, & more!

Are you interested in being a vendor? We're looking for artists, artisans, and other vendors who want to sell handmade items or crafts. Spots are \$40 each. Contact us for more info.



## Arlington Historical Society news



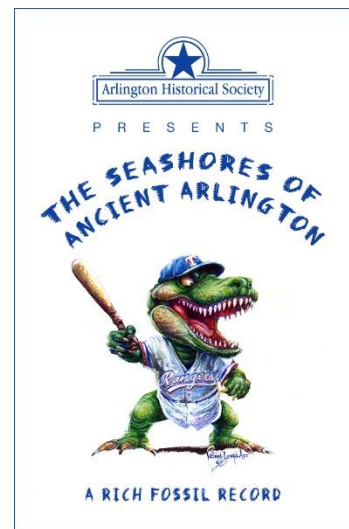
### **North Texas Giving Day | September 19th**

As a nonprofit organization, we primarily rely on donations, grants, and fundraisers. North Texas Giving Day is a perfect time to support the Arlington Historical Society. Your donation allows us to operate Fielder Museum, Knapp Heritage Park, and the Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds. One of our biggest needs currently is quality display cases to properly preserve and display Arlington's history—your donation can help us get them!

Visit the link below to donate anytime through September 19th. Prefer to donate by cash or check? No problem! Feel free to bring your donation by Fielder or Knapp during our business hours. We appreciate your support! || [www.northtexasgivingday.org/organization/historicalarlington](http://www.northtexasgivingday.org/organization/historicalarlington)

### **"The Seashores of Ancient Arlington: A Rich Fossil Record" continues at Fielder**

Our new exhibit at Fielder Museum features numerous fossil displays. It has been quite popular with kids and adults, and visitors have found the fossils to be a fascinating part of Arlington's history. We've had several groups visit and hope to host some school field trips soon. Good news—we've extended the exhibit through October due to popular demand! Come out and see it.



## Local History news

### **Tillie Burgin and Mission Arlington going strong**

August marks two notable dates for Mission Arlington. The Lester family moved to Arlington in the 1930s, with Tillie born on August 24, 1936. Patriarch Erman Lester started a gas station and operated it for 45 years. The family lived in what is now Downtown Arlington. Mission Arlington, which Tillie founded on August 1, 1986, is located only a block from the former Lester family homestead.

Tillie graduated from Arlington High School in 1954. She married Bob Burgin in 1956 at the First Baptist Church of Arlington. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from North Texas State University in Denton, now known as UNT. Bob joined the military in 1958 and was stationed in South Korea. Tillie went with him and lived in missionary housing, teaching English there. The couple had two sons, and the family later returned to South Korea as missionaries.

Bob and Tillie returned to Arlington in 1978. They realized that if they could do missionary work in South Korea, why not the same in Arlington? Tillie started the nonprofit Mission Arlington in 1986—a faith-based organization providing goods and services to community members who need them. Mission Metroplex began in 1990, greatly expanding the organization's outreach efforts to

assist even more people. For nearly 40 years, Tillie has led Mission Arlington as the Executive Director, truly making a difference in our community and being a tremendous resource.

Going far beyond clothes and canned food, Mission Arlington and Mission Metroplex provide an array of services, including bible studies, health care, counseling, school supplies, after-school programs, transportation, and emergency assistance. They provide all this free of charge, relying on donations and community support.



Tillie was named Arlington Citizen Journal "Woman of the Year" in 1990. Since then, she has received countless awards and recognitions. Tillie still shows up daily to help serve the community and is well-loved throughout Arlington and beyond.

*Photo Credit: Mission Arlington*

### **Officer Craig Hanking—End of Watch: August 3, 1994**

*Arlington Police Officer Craig Hanking, age 26, died in the line of duty on August 3, 1994. This year marks the 30th anniversary.*

Craig Hanking was born May 22, 1968, in Arlington. He graduated from Martin High School in 1986 and later earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Baylor University. Initially an accountant, Hanking felt a calling to serve and help people. He believed he could make a greater impact in law enforcement and graduated from the Arlington Police Academy in March 1994.

Around 3:00 AM on August 3, 1994, Officer Hanking responded to a burglary-in-progress call at a nearby apartment complex. While in transit, his patrol car struck a tractor-trailer. The vehicle became lodged underneath and was dragged for about 50 feet. Hanking died from the injuries sustained. The tragic accident occurred near Cooper Street and Park Row Drive.

Over 1,300 attended funeral services at Lake Arlington Baptist Church. Burial was at Moore Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Arlington with full honors, including a 21-gun salute and a bagpipe rendition of Amazing Grace. Local law enforcement held a moment of silence on the police radio. The Fort Worth Police Department and CareFlite helicopters performed a flyover in tribute.



Fellow officers remarked that Hanking was "*a good cop headed for a bright career.*" Classmates recalled his eagerness and enthusiasm. Family and peers remembered him as charismatic, outgoing, energetic, selfless, well-liked, and respected. He was also playfully nicknamed "Mr. Potato Head" by fellow officers for his fondness for snacking on plain baked potatoes.

Arlington remembers Officer Craig Hanking with a street name, a plaque at Heroes Park, and a memorial sign near the accident site. We are grateful for his service to Arlington.

## Exciting groundbreaking held for the new Caravan Court Hotel



Nearly 150 guests attended the August 14th groundbreaking ceremony for the new Caravan Court Hotel, expected to open in 2026.

The Caravan Motor Hotel opened at 908 E. Division Street in 1961, the same year Six Flags began operations. Indeed, with the motel only a few miles from Six Flags, many travelers to (and passing through) Arlington choose the Caravan for their lodging needs. The property remained a popular place to stay for decades.

In June 2024, developers announced that the Caravan Motor Hotel would be getting a new life. A boutique hotel, the Caravan Court Hotel, will soon stand in its place, with throwbacks to the former tourist court, including the iconic sign. Developers plan to incorporate mid-century design elements with architectural, art, and automotive aesthetics. The hotel is anticipated to start a revitalization effort along the Division Street Corridor—sparking a revived interest in the historic Bankhead Highway while further adding to Arlington's diverse tourism brand.

The August 14th groundbreaking ceremony drew an enthusiastic crowd, with guests enjoying refreshments and a social hour before the event. Anticipation grew while folks mingled. "This is awesome," said one guest. "This is so exciting, a game-changer," said another. "Let's bring back the Bankhead Highway, man!" another exclaimed. Indeed, standing in the shadow of the former motel, which was in the process of being torn down, there was excitement in the air. The Caravan's skeleton amid demolition and construction equipment, juxtaposed with renderings of the new property, allowed the past, present, and future to intersect into a new beginning.

Arlington Mayor Jim Ross, former Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams, and DWG Mayor Laurie Bianco attended the event. Other attendees included representatives from city council, city employees, economic development, chamber of commerce, and tourism. Further, folks from the investment, real estate, demolition, architectural, design, and construction teams were also present.

"How cool is this?" remarked Mayor Ross. He spoke of how the project would catalyze the Entertainment District and Downtown Arlington, helping to connect the two districts.

The project is led by Sam Mahrouq, a UTA graduate, investor, and business owner, with ambitious plans for the property. The hotel will have 145 rooms, event space, and many first-class amenities. Shown here is a rendering with the view from Division Street.



*Special thanks to Georgie Zang and Jamie Adams of Zang | Adams Real Estate for inviting me to the event!*