

## Arlington Historical Society | April 2022 Newsletter

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### **Arlington Historical Society**

#### **Executive Board Members**

Geraldine Mills | Executive Director

Nancy Tice | President

Lydia Brosowsky | Secretary

Wanda Marshall | Treasurer

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Email: [fielderh@swbell.net](mailto:fielderh@swbell.net) | Website: [www.historicalarlington.org](http://www.historicalarlington.org) | Phone: 817-460-4001

#### **Our Venues**

##### **Fielder Museum**

1616 W. Abram Street

Arlington, Texas 76013

[www.facebook.com/FielderHouseMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/FielderHouseMuseum)

##### **Knapp Heritage Park**

201 W. Front Street

Arlington, Texas 76011

[www.facebook.com/knapp.park](https://www.facebook.com/knapp.park)

##### **Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds**

600 W. Arkansas Lane

Arlington, Texas 76010

[www.ahmgc.org](http://www.ahmgc.org)

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

April is a special month for Arlington and the Arlington Historical Society. Four events in April – Arlington's incorporation, the first Texas Rangers game, Fielder Museum opening, and a special event honoring Geraldine Mills – are highlighted in this month's newsletter.

If you're on Facebook, follow the Fielder House Museum page and check out our recent posts. Be sure to like, comment, and share often, especially with others who aren't part of the AHS.

Did you know that we have a new website? We're putting some final touches on it and getting ready for the official launch. More info is coming very soon!

**Jason S. Sullivan, 04-25-22**

Newsletter Editor

Arlington Historical Society

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### **Upcoming Events**

- **May – Preservation Month; a perfect time to get out and visit Arlington's historic sites!**
- **August 8 – AHS Board Meeting, Fielder House, 6:30 PM**
- **November 14 – AHS Board Meeting, Fielder House, 6:30 PM**
- **TBD – Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds Celebration (original date postponed)**



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### **Arlington, Texas: Incorporated April 21, 1884**

Local historians often consider July 19, 1876 – the date the Texas & Pacific Railroad first stopped in town – to be the founding of Arlington. The Post Office would recognize the town in 1877. Yet, Arlington wouldn't officially incorporate as a town until several years later.

By the early 1880s, Arlington's population was around 200 people. Folks began to move from Johnson Station and other areas into Arlington. It was a time of growth, and being near the railroad certainly helped. Farming was common, although cotton ginning would become the primary

industry. Arlington soon had churches, saloons, general stores, drug stores, a lumberyard, a doctor, and its first newspaper, The World, established in 1883. George W. Finger (1857-1899) was Arlington's first official mayor.

Community leaders drafted a dozen ordinances shortly before the town was incorporated. The Town Council of Arlington approved these ordinances on April 15, 1884.

In summary, these ordinances:

1. Prevented the carrying of arms.
2. Prohibited indecent exposure.
3. Governed the sale of liquors.
4. Prohibited the riding of horses into houses. | Yes, you read that right!
5. Prohibited commerce on the Sabbath (also known as Sunday Law.)
6. Dictated where and when Town Council meetings could occur.
7. Dictated the need to dispose of animal carcasses after slaughter.
8. Prohibited offenses against the Peace.
9. Established the powers and duties of Aldermen.
10. Regulated the stoppage of animals and vehicles.
11. Prohibited vagrancy.
12. Prohibited gaming.

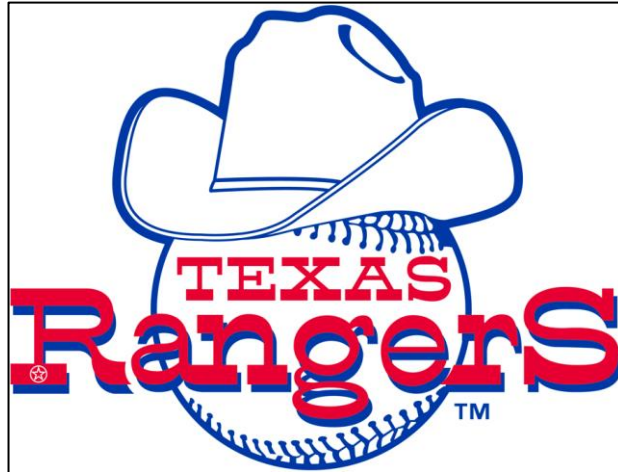
On April 19, with the ordinances approved, Arlington filed the paperwork with the Tarrant County Courthouse in Fort Worth to incorporate as a town. It became official on April 21, 1884: Arlington, Texas, was now a town.



## **Texas Rangers celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> season in Arlington**

*In 1972, the Washington Senators baseball club relocated to Arlington, becoming the Texas Rangers. Their first game at Arlington Stadium was April 21, 1972, which resulted in a 7-6 win over the California Angels. The club won 54 out of 154 games in its first season.*

This year marks the Rangers' 50th season in Arlington. There will be special events, throwback uniforms, and various promotions throughout the season.



*(Texas Rangers logo, 1972-1980,  
Photo Credit: SportsLogos.Net.)*

One of the special events is a documentary called *Journey to Baseball Town*. This four-part documentary focuses on how the baseball club came to Arlington.

The first episode – "Leading Off: The Boy Mayor" – focuses on how Mayor Tom Vandergriff wanted to bring a professional sports team to Arlington. As mentioned in the documentary, *"It's the story of a boy-mayor, and his quest for a Field of Dreams, right here in Arlington."* It took more than a decade to bring a baseball club here, and it wasn't an easy task.

The documentary delves into more about Vandergriff and Arlington during that time, told through interviews, stories, and photos. Vandergriff's can-do spirit is evident – he wanted Arlington to grow and believed that the town would benefit from the economic development that often comes with a sports team. Arlington surely benefited and continues to do so.

The first episode is available to watch on YouTube, while the remaining episodes will debut throughout the Rangers' 50th season.

YouTube link: [Journey to Baseball Town: Episode 1](#)

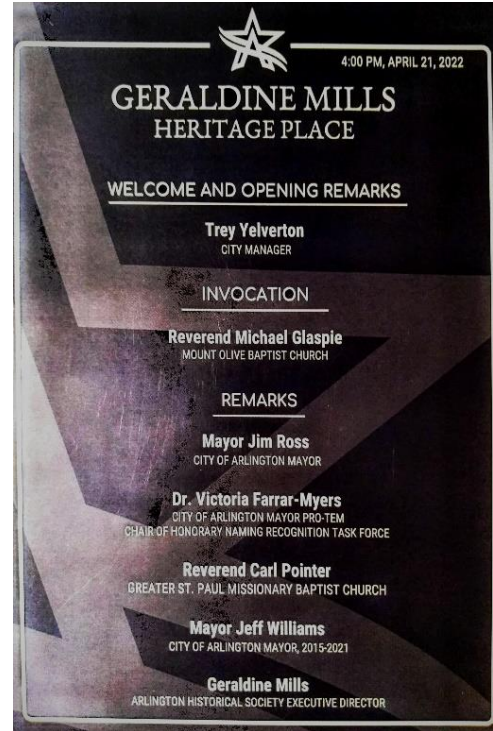
## **Geraldine Mills honored with special event**

On April 21, more than 100 people attended the dedication ceremony honoring Geraldine Mills, where the grounds at Fielder Museum were renamed Geraldine Mills Heritage Place.

In attendance were her family, friends, and colleagues; city council members, former mayors, residents, and Arlington Historical Society members also attended.

The program began with a welcome from City Manager Trey Yelverton, followed by an invocation by Reverend Michael Glaspie of Mount Olive Baptist Church. Guest speakers included Arlington Mayor Jim Ross, Mayor Pro Term Dr. Victoria Farrar-Myers, Reverend Carl Pointer, and former Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams.

Each of the speakers showered Geraldine with praise, admiration, and gratitude. They told stories, shared memories, and spoke with warmth and respect for her accomplishments. There was also mention of her energy, perseverance, and hard work. Their speeches concluded that the honor was the ultimate recognition and, indeed, the exact place that we should honor her.



*Geraldine addresses the crowd, as the guest speakers enjoy her speech.*

At last, Geraldine took the podium and graciously said a few words. She thanked her family and more than a dozen other people for their support. She also thanked Board Members and past Presidents of the AHS, among others.

After the speeches, it was time for the grand finale – the unveiling of the new sign. The crowd made their way to the edge of the property. Arlington Police Department blocked traffic so we could spill out into Abram Street and get the best view. The anticipation began to build.

Once everyone was ready, the countdown began. Three, two, one!



*Fielder Museum at Geraldine Mills Heritage Place*

The new sign was unveiled and met with cheers and applause.

Many folks took turns posing for photos with Geraldine in front of the new sign.

Afterward, the Arlington Historical Society served refreshments. Folks came inside from the hot and muggy afternoon to cool off, continue the celebration, and tour the Fielder Museum.

In addition to the new sign, there was also a plaque about Geraldine placed near the museum's entrance. A photo and the plaque's text are on the following page of the newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make this special event such a memorable occasion. And, thank you to Geraldine for everything you've done to help preserve Arlington's history! The new sign and plaque are a well-deserved honor.

If you couldn't attend the event, stop by the museum to view the new sign and plaque. There are more photos from the event on our Facebook page.



## Plaque at Fielder Museum honors Geraldine Mills

*Below is the text from Geraldine's plaque, which was also unveiled at the event on April 21.*

### Geraldine Nash Mills

A lifelong Arlington resident, Geraldine Nash Mills has been active in the community in a variety of roles for over 60 years. Geraldine began school at Southside Elementary School and was a member of the Arlington High School Class of 1959. She then studied geology at Arlington State College (now the University of Texas at Arlington.) Geraldine married her husband, James Mills, in 1959 and together they raised four children in Arlington.

Volunteering came easy to Geraldine. She was active with the area Parent-Teacher Associations, coached cheerleading and softball, and volunteered for many school activities. In 1996, Geraldine began volunteering with the Arlington Historical Society and there found her true calling. She worked her way up from volunteer to President, and since 2000 has been the Director of the Arlington Historical Society and the Fielder Museum.

Geraldine has had a front row seat to all things Arlington and is relentless in preserving the artifacts of her hometown of over 80 years. If you are "old Arlington," Geraldine will happily ask you to donate your artifacts for display at the Fielder Museum. She keeps her eye on the present, by advising the citizens of Arlington about why it's important to preserve a community's history.

Geraldine has served in several community service roles, including as President of the Arlington Garden Club, President of the Arlington Historical Society from 1998-2000, as a member of the City's Futures 2025 Committee in 2003, and as a member of the Landmark Preservation Commission from 2015 to 2019 and 2021 to 2023.

For her dedication and hard work Geraldine has been honored with many awards, including the Fort Worth Star-Telegram's Woman of the Year in 2000, the Webb Community Builders Award in 2009, the William Jary Award from the Tarrant County Historical Commission in 2010, the Arlington High School Distinguished Colt Alumni Award in 2011, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Community Award in 2020. In addition, she was honored to serve as the Grand Marshal of the City of Arlington's Fourth of July Parade in 2014.



"Before you go anywhere, you have to know where you came from."

- Geraldine Mills

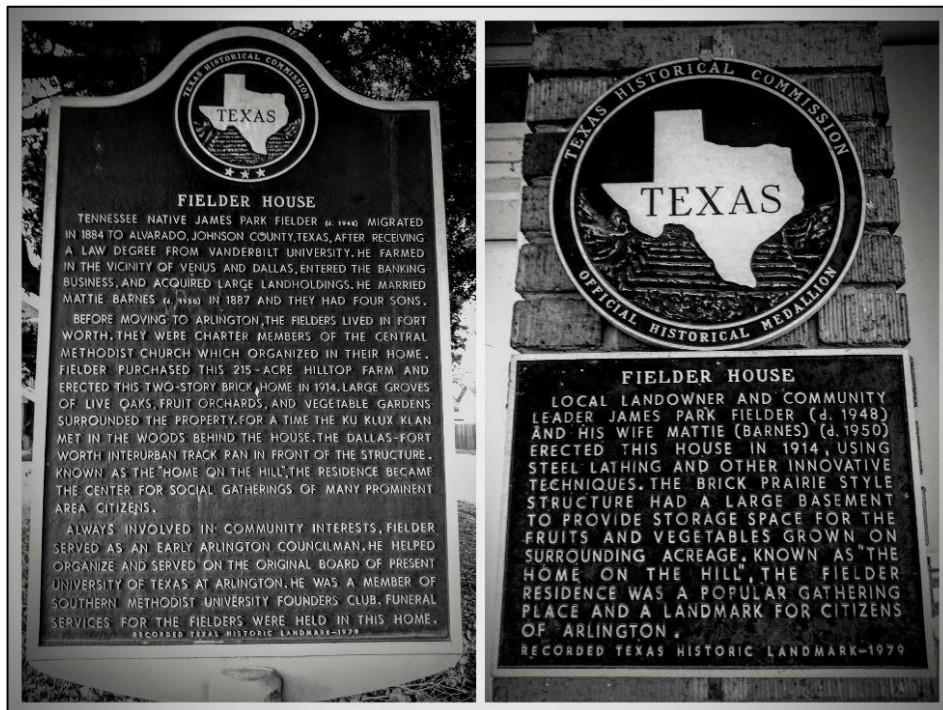
**Fielder Museum celebrates 42 years**

Happy Anniversary to us! The Fielder Museum opened on April 20, 1980. Also, on that date, our two Texas Historical Markers were dedicated.

Thank you to all of our supporters, members, volunteers, and donors over the years!



*Fielder Museum*



*Fielder Museum – Texas Historical Markers*