



HISTORIC SAVANNAH FOUNDATION NAMES RICHARD KESSLER RECIPIENT OF NEW HISTORIC SAVANNAH SPIRIT AWARD

SAVANNAH, GA – SEPTEMBER 10, 2019 – Historic Savannah Foundation will honor its inaugural Historic Savannah Spirit Award recipient during the organization’s Annual Gala on Saturday, Oct. 19 in Forsyth Park.

The first-ever honoree is Mr. Richard C. Kessler, a Savannah native and the current Chairman and CEO of The Kessler Enterprise, Inc. He is known as a visionary entrepreneur in the field of hotel development and operations. After founding the Kessler Collection in 1995, he amassed an impressive portfolio of nine boutique hotels and is currently handling the restoration and development of Savannah’s historic Riverside Power Plant, which will be known as the Plant Riverside District. In addition, Kessler has a 250-room Grand Bohemian Hotel in Charlotte, NC, scheduled to open spring, 2020, and a 180-room Grand Bohemian Hotel in Greenville, SC, scheduled to open in the 4th Quarter, 2020.

The known preservationist recently restored the 100-year-old Armstrong Mansion at Gaston and Bull streets, returning it to its original grandeur. The Armstrong Kessler Mansion, as it is now known, won the top HSF Preservation Award this past May. In past years, Kessler renovated the two historic Kehoe homes on Columbia Square, the 700 Drayton historic building of the Mansion on Forsyth Park, the historic Coca-Cola Bottling Plant on Bay Street which became the Mulberry Inn, and what was known as the bargain corner grocery store building on Bay Street which became a Hotel Suite. All of these buildings date back to the 1800’s. Kessler is also a creative philanthropist, an ardent supporter of the local arts and cultural scenes, and an impassioned collector of art and antiques.

According to Gala Committee Chair Kim Lyle, “The committee developed a strong set of criteria when choosing a recipient, including preservation efforts, community contributions, and good stewardship.”

Kessler was nominated by HSF’s Board of Trustees and voted on by HSF’s gala committee, headed by Lyle. HSF’s new Spirit Award was designed to commend Savannah residents who most embody the

spirit of HSF's seven founders, Elinor Grunsfeld Adler, Katharine Judkins Clark, Anna Colquitt Hunter, Lucy Barrow McIntire, Dorothy Ripley Roebling, Nola McEvoy Roos and Jane Adair Wright.

Lyle said, "In choosing Mr. Kessler as the honoree of HSF's Historic Savannah Spirit Award, several things were considered by our Gala Committee and HSF Board, including his dedication to the historic preservation of Savannah, the positive economic impact he has made to the city, and his embodiment of the Spirit of the Seven Founders of HSF."

Lyle added, "Mr. Kessler helped bring national recognition to Savannah along with maintaining the integrity of the Historic District and surrounding areas. The Gala committee is confident he is someone who is able to take Savannah into the future without compromising its past, and he has the ability to help further HSF's mission." One may learn more about Kessler's work through his website at kesslercollection.com.

Kessler will accept his Historic Savannah Spirit Award during the gala, aptly themed "Call of the Triton's Horn" for the soiree's proximity to the famed Forsyth Park fountain, which features four spouting triton figures carrying shell horns in the basin. J. Chad Crawford, owner of 13 Secrets Savannah is designing, producing, and donating the beautiful trophy to be presented.

For more information on the gala or to purchase tickets, please visit www.myhsf.org. To learn more about sponsorship packages that meet individual needs, please call Chief Advancement Officer Nadine Mooers at 912-483-7295 or email nmooers@myHSF.org.

HSF saves buildings, places, and stories that define Savannah's past, present and future. Following its formation in 1955, the nonprofit organization started a Revolving Fund to save endangered historic properties, now totaling nearly 409 buildings that have been saved and protected throughout several of Savannah's historic districts. HSF is committed to continuing to build capacity within HSF's operations, secure new financial resources, improve HSF's image and visibility, and increase public policy efforts to protect Savannah's historic districts.

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