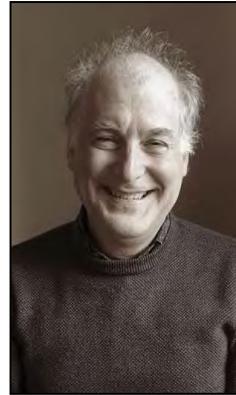


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Penchant for History Becomes Educator's Passion

A PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT Ball State University, Ron Morris values historic places as physical manifestations of our forebears' dreams, values, and stories. When he moved back to Indiana from Texas in 2002, his search for home drew him to an 1830 Federal-style rowhouse in Centerville. The property's provenance sealed the deal: it was the former home of James Rariden, an Indiana congressman who hosted Henry Clay overnight as he campaigned for President along the National Road in 1844.

With technical advice from our staff, Morris restored the rowhouse inside and out. To protect his hard work, he donated a preservation easement on the property to Indiana Landmarks.



The experience gave him the confidence to take on another significant property in 2011, when he purchased the 1848 Centerville home of Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton from Indiana Landmarks, which had purchased the long-neglected Greek Revival-style house on the National Road to ensure its future. We attached protective covenants before selling the property to Morris with confidence he could return the house to its former splendor.

Morris removed intrusive interior additions, reading ghost marks on floors and walls to puzzle out the original layout. Tearing down a wall added in the 1920s, he discovered a scrap of historic wallpaper he had replicated and applied in its original location in the back hall. Physical clues guided work throughout, as Morris aimed to return the home to its early appearance. He incorporated modern heating, cooling, and lighting in a way that minimizes their intrusion. He's leaving a 1970s addition in place for now, until he can figure out how the space it adjoins originally looked. Morris wrapped up the years-long restoration in April. The house will be used for programs illuminating Morton's story and available to rent for events. "Taking something from imagination to finished project is a really fun process. It's very satisfying, as a steward of these historic properties, to be able to turn back the clock so the houses have integrity again," says Morris.

Growing up on Indianapolis's south side, Morris first encountered Indiana Landmarks in the '70s, when he joined his father, a professor of American Education at Butler University, on a field trip to our Morris-Butler House in Indianapolis. He became better connected with the organization as an elementary school teacher, attending the statewide preservation conference and participating with his students in a nationwide survey documenting outdoor sculpture. His work to help educators bring history alive for their students merited our Sandi Servaas Memorial Award in 2012. Morris has included Indiana Landmarks in his estate plans, becoming a member of our Heritage Society.

"Indiana Landmarks is relevant to the cultural integrity of Indiana," says Morris. "It is the best voice we have to try to create communities that are stellar visually, aesthetically, and historically."

Ball State University History Professor Ron Morris's appreciation of heritage led him to membership in Indiana Landmarks. He rehabbed his Federal-style rowhouse in Centerville, where he also recently completed restoring Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton's home (top right). A winner of our Sandi Servaas Memorial Award, Morris has included Indiana Landmarks in his estate plans.
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