



Mike Hardy, a Lifetime of Service to University City

The University City Historical Society mourns the loss of Mike Hardy (1936-2021). On July 22nd the sad news of the passing of Mike Hardy, after a long battle with illness, began making the rounds. Mike lived in University City, with his husband, Barry Grosbach, for over 50 years. Before Mike and Barry had moved into their forever home in West Philadelphia they had considered a number of other sections of the city, such as Fairmount and Mount Airy. Accessibility to public transit was a huge factor in their decision. As Mike noted in his recent interview with UCHS, their home on 43rd Street was only one block away from four different trolley lines. The two saw the obvious advantages of their new “streetcar suburb.”

Mike was intimately involved with UCHS for more than 35 years beginning in the 1970’s and was responsible for many of the organization’s most profound initiatives. Simply put, UCHS would not be who we are today without his involvement. During his tenure, Mike served as the organization’s Vice President, Newsletter Editor, Registrar, and chaired the Historic Streetscape Committee, among others. Mike was passionate, charming, driven, and energetic: a combination that allowed him to recruit volunteers and convince countless community members to serve as board members while Mike continued to do so much of the work himself.

Beginning in 1978, Mike led a several-decade long partnership with the Woodland’s Cemetery. During this time, Mike was successful in securing more than \$300,000 in grants for the Woodlands that benefited projects such as the Hamilton Mansion ballroom restoration, archeological investigation, and exterior repairs. This partnership would lead to the establishment of the Friends of the Woodlands, with several hundred community members contributing to the cause. In 1994, under Mike’s initiative, the Hamilton Mansion would be opened to the public for the first time since the 1840’s. Although UCHS moved out of the Woodlands in 1997, the idea that the Woodlands could become a community asset has endured.

Mike’s additional UCHS initiatives included countless house

tours, welcome packets for new neighbors, our now renowned Gift to the Street Awards, book talks, preservation advocacy, and an incom-

parable knowledge of all things neighborhood related. As soon as one large project was finished, Mike would jump into the next with passion and rigor.

When Mike became sick in 2010, UCHS found itself in a position of having to pivot on a dime. Through the work of our generous volunteers we were able to continue his many initiatives without the benefit of his skill, knowledge or involvement. UCHS and Mike were nearly synonymous. In January of 2019 we at UCHS were lucky enough to interview Mike and Barry Grosbach at their home on 43rd Street as part of our Oral History Project. You can view the entire interview with Mike and Barry, which runs about half an hour, on the UCHS Youtube channel.

Although Mike had not been active with UCHS in more than 10 years, his impact remains profound. Mike Hardy was one of a kind. How incredibly fortunate we are to have had Mike Hardy as a neighbor and community advocate. As a small token of our gratitude for Mike’s tireless contributions to UCHS and West Philadelphia as a whole, we are honored to rename the annual Preservation Initiative Award in Mike’s Honor.

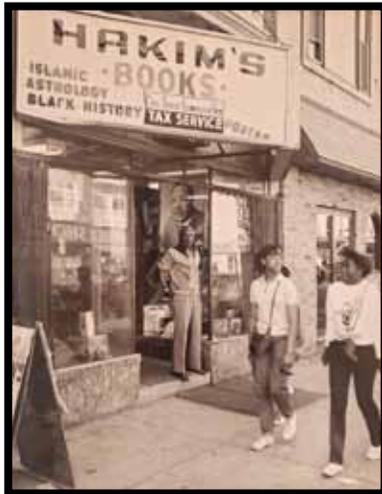


Mike Hardy relaxing at home. Barry Grosbach, photographer. Below, photo of the bowl in Clark Park. Mike was instrumental in transforming the park into the neighborhood asset it is today. Joseph Minardi, photographer.

We are pleased to announce that the annual UCHS Preservation Initiative Award will be renamed in Mike Hardy’s honor. Now known as the Mike Hardy Preservation Initiative Award, this award is given annually to a person or group of people who have acted unselfishly towards the preservation of an historical neighborhood resource in West Philadelphia. Naming this award in Mike’s honor will provide us with the opportunity to reflect on Mike’s lasting contribution to our community for decades to come.

Hakim's Bookstore

South 52nd Street has seen a variety of cultural and commercial activity over the years, from a row of theaters to the protests in the wake of George Floyd's death, but there has been one constant since 1959: Hakim's Bookstore and Gift Shop. Hakim's was the first African American bookstore in Pennsylvania. Dawud Hakim loved books and learning and he opened the store to share the bounty of Black perspectives. An early adherent to Islam, Dawud Hakim engaged with a variety of people important in the civil rights era such as Dick Gregory and with local mosques who were agitating for social justice. Today, this independent bookstore is operated by Hakim's daughter Yvonne Blake who carries on her father's tradition of selling books and Africana from the same storefront. Since the summer of 2020, Hakim's has been filling orders for Black books from across North America and Europe. We are lucky to have this historic community resource in our neighborhood. Why not stop in and pick up some reading for your family or to share with your neighborhood little free library?



Undated photograph of the exterior of Hakim's Bookstore & Gift Shop, 210 S. 52nd Street. Courtesy of Yvonne Blake.

UCHS is Rebranding!

UCHS is in the process of updating our branding materials and collateral, and with that comes a redesign of our logo! We are using this opportunity to design a logo that better reflects our mission to advocate for the preservation of the history, architecture and cultural heritage of West Philadelphia. UCHS is in the process of updating our branding materials and collateral, and with that comes a redesign of our logo! We are using this opportunity to design a logo that better reflects our mission to advocate for the preservation of the history, architecture and cultural heritage of West Philadelphia. This rebranding will also kick off a campaign to expand our membership. We are providing members with the opportunity to weigh in and provide feedback on the new design. Be on the lookout for an email with three logo options currently under consideration and let us know which one is your favorite. The new logo will be revealed in the next issue of *On the West Side*. This rebranding will also kick off a campaign to expand our membership. We are providing members with the opportunity to weigh in and provide feedback on the new design. Be on the lookout for an email with three logo options currently under consideration and let us know which one is your favorite. The new logo will be revealed in the next issue of *On the West Side*.

We are excited to announce that the University City Historical Society has a new president with Amy Lambert taking the helm. Amy will be replacing George Poulin as president. We are indebted to George for the fantastic job he's done during his two terms as president. Jennifer Loustau will be taking the Vice President position.

Spring Garden Historic District is Now a Reality!

Good news! The latest historic district nomination that UCHS has sponsored has made it on to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places! 3611-3631 Spring Garden Street at the border of Powelton Village and Mantua is significant as the work of H.E. Flower (1869-1918), a prolific and understudied figure in Philadelphia architectural history who either influenced or heavily borrowed from Willis G. Hale and as an example of Flemish Renaissance Revival architecture subject to late Victorian interest in architectural eclecticism.

In 1894, developer Benjamin Gardiner purchased the Truitt mansion property and constructed eleven contiguous buildings on it containing "all modern improvements and conveniences." The next year, Powelton Village resident and noted brewer Frederick A. Poth took title to the property; Poth dabbled in real estate development in the area including the 4100 block of Parkside Avenue and 3301-15 Powelton Avenue. While Gardiner was listed as the architect on the building permit, our research indicates Henry E. Flower who was a draftsman for Hale and a contributor to the Parkside development. Flower was also responsible for Hawthorne Hall on Lancaster at 39th Street.

Flemish Renaissance Revival architecture is indebted to the merchant architecture of Belgium and the Netherlands in the late Middle Ages. Its nineteenth century revival is partially attributed



Exterior of house in Spring Garden Historic District. Amy Lambert, photographer.

to the design for the Belgian Pavilion for the World Exposition in Paris in 1878. Its most recognizable feature is its stepped or curved gable. Buildings are usually brick with terra cotta in Dutch baroque motifs.

Member News

Welcome to 2021's
New and Restored Members:

Deirdre Aaron
Fred Allen Barfoot
Mary McGettigan & Larry Caputo, MD
Murray & Libby Dubin & Rosof
Jacob Gantz
Jeanette Gillison
Ivy Gray-Klein
Ann Kell
Elaine Lander
Anita McKelvey
Betty Moloznik
Julie Orts
Tobias Schulze-Cleven
Martin Seligman
Charles A. Thrall & Sally A. Simmons
Carrie Waterman
Jeffrey Young
Randy Zauhar & Jenny Yu

2021 Donations to UCHS – Thank You!

Eric Cohen & Anne Pomerantz
Roger & Joyce Converse
Robert Glorioso
Michael D. Hardy & Barry L. Grossbach
John Puckett & Karin Schaller
Maureen Tate
Marianna Thomas
Helma Weeks

Question? Ideas? Contact us at
info@UCHS.net

Ask the Experts

DON'T GET STEAMED!

Q: I think my radiator is malfunctioning. How can I be sure there is a problem?

A: A steam heating system that isn't working properly will always let you know about it --loud and clear. Its vocabulary will consist of thumps, gurgles, and hisses.

Thumps and gurgles are symptoms of the same malady. They are caused by bubbles of steam struggling through pockets of water. To silence them, you must find where water is collecting and eliminate it.

The first place to look is the boiler. If the water level is too high, then water can be entrained in the steam. This will cause lots of sloshing in the distribution pipes.

If the boiler has a proper water level, then the problem is probably in the radiator. A radiator that slopes the wrong way (that is, away from the valve) will trap water inside itself. Steam bubbling its way through this water can be very noisy.

The cure is to alter the slope of the radiator. Insert wooden shims under the two feet farthest away from the valve. Use a level to make sure that the radiator is now tipping toward the valve. Result: All the water will drain back to the boiler.

Hissing is acceptable only from the vent, and even then only for a brief time. After the steam has risen, the vent should close with an audible pop; silence should reign thereafter. If hissing continues, then it is time to replace the vent.

Of course, you should also replace the vent if it never hisses. A vent that isn't hissing isn't venting air. And if air isn't vented, then steam will be unable to enter and the radiator won't heat properly.

From *The Old-House Journal*, November 1981.

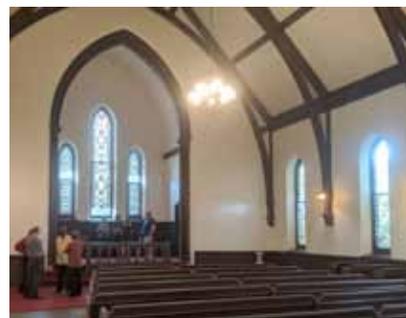
Mt. Pleasant Primitive Baptist Open House, 6/26/21

On June 6th UCHS hosted an open house at the Mt. Pleasant Primitive Baptist Church at 435-441 N. 38th Street. It was a very successful event with several dozen participants in attendance. Church leaders from the nearby Metropolitan Baptist, St. Andrew and St. Monica, and Tyree AME also participated. The Gothic-revival church was built in 1870 (when it was known as Christ Methodist Episcopal Church), and designed by the firm of Furness & Hewitt. It was recently added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places with the nomination written by Amy Lambert.

From the Nomination:

“Christ Methodist Episcopal Church is a historically significant work by Frank Furness and George W. Hewitt, which vividly illustrates the forms and techniques that made them architects of international stature. Furness and Hewitt are central figures in the High Victorian movement in American architecture, and their Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts is among the most original and imaginative works of the era. At Christ M.E. Church, they creatively adapted High Victorian architectural ideas to the symbolic and practical requirements of a Methodist congregation. The church is an important precursor to the Auditorium Plan, the chief in-

novation in American religious architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century. The church and its congregation are intertwined with the development of the Mantua and Powelton Village neighborhoods of west Philadelphia. Further, a few individual members of the congregation contributed significantly to Philadelphia's cultural heritage and in a broader sense, reflected the steadfast aspirations of early west Philadelphia Methodists. The circumstances of the church mirrored those of this area, growing steadily until the post-war period. In 1970, the church building was sold by the Methodist Extension Society to an African American Primitive Baptist congregation who continue to worship in the building today.



Interior of Mt. Pleasant Primitive Baptist Church. George Poulin, photographer.



LOOKING UP! – VICTORIAN CEILING TREATMENTS

CEILING DECORATION

Victorians were generally more concerned about how to decorate their ceilings than they were about the walls or any other interior aspect. For the first half of the nineteenth century, the ceiling and cornices were the domain of the decorative plasterer, who supplied centerpieces sometimes called “flowers,” molding for panel and border effects, and the cornices. The most expensive ceilings were sometimes embellished by a decorative painter in addition to the decorative plasterer, and on rare occasions by an artist in stained glass. During the second half of the nineteenth century, ceilings were declared open territory for paperhangers, ordinary painters, and stencilers. There was much discussion about colors, but it was generally agreed that ceilings, because they are highest in the room and therefore most

closely related to the sky, should be decorated in lighter colors than those of the walls or the floors.

Continued in next issue.

From *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Victoriana*. Nancy Rushling and John Crosby Freeman, 1994.



Ceiling flowers in Powelton homes. Joseph Minardi, photographer.

West Philly Through the Lens HAVERFORD AVENUE EAST OF 42ND, 1907



Joseph Minardi photo collection.

MUSINGS ON THE QUEEN ANNE HOUSE

[The ideal Queen Anne house] “...should have a conical corner-tower, it should be built of at least three incongruous materials, or better, imitations thereof; it should have its window openings absolutely haphazard; it should represent parts of every known and unknown order of architecture; it should be so plastered with ornament as to conceal the theory of its construction; it should be a restless, uncertain, frightful collection of details, giving the effect of a nightmare about to explode.”

-Gelett Burgess (1866-1951).

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