

Old Town Legacy Awards

Watercolor artist among those honored

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DANVILLE — Watercolor artist Amy Chrisman's series of paintings of Vermilion County landmarks are becoming well known around the area.

Chrisman has combined her love of history with her artistic talent in the series of paintings which have included: the Kathryn Randolph Theater, Lamon House, Masonic Center and First Presbyterian Church.

Old Town Preservation Association is the latest group to recognize her efforts in "putting a permanent record together by these drawings of these jewels," according to the association president, Carolyn Wands.

The association honored Chrisman and Julius W. Hegeler II with Advocate Awards Thursday night as part its annual Legacy Awards presentation at Your Family Resource Connection.

The awards recognize preservation efforts.

The group hasn't given out Advocate Awards in recent years.

But the group thought it was fitting this year to recognize Chrisman and Hegeler as people who have made significant contributions to the area.

Wands said Hegeler's work with the war museum, Fischer Theatre, his homes and his backing of other worthwhile programs is to be commended.

Chrisman was shocked when she learned of the award.

She said the phone call came at a low moment for her.

"I had been feeling discouraged by what seemed like a lack of interest in my project to raise awareness and fundraising money for important Vermilion County landmarks through the sale of prints. In fact, I had just spoken to a family member in Arizona that suggested I find a different community that would support my interest in depicting



Danville Art League member Amy Chrisman was recently honored by the Old Town Preservation Society for her series of paintings of Vermilion County landmarks. She is pictured above at a reception on June 19 at the Vermilion Place restaurant, where she officially unveiled her latest landmark painting -- that of the Fischer Theatre.

historic landmarks," she said through an e-mail.

"So when Carolyn Wands called to tell me that Old Town Preservation wanted to present me with an award for my preservation efforts, I was speechless. I felt as though it was a sign from above that I should stay the course and continue my efforts to promote Vermilion County, Illinois, through my artwork. So the recognition was a real shot in the arm for me. It was a tangible sign that perhaps I am on the right track after all."

Chrisman has just finished a painting of the Fischer Theatre.

Limited edition prints will officially go on sale at a special Fischer Theatre fundraising event at 5 p.m. June 19 at Vermilion Place. The proceeds from the print sales will go to the Vermilion Heritage Foundation, which is in charge of Fischer preservation efforts.

"We have a lot of exciting plans for the Fischer and I am really enthused about the painting and the energy being generated by it," Chrisman said.

Other Legacy Award winners:

• Douglas Miller, who has restored a barn in Indianola which houses antique farm machinery.

• St. Paul's Church for work completed inside and out.

• Your Family Resource Connection for its refurbished gym, new paint job and other work.

Wands said Old Town members try to look for places all year that have made preservation efforts.

Wands said it was a good year for the association.

Last year was the first time it participated in the downtown Night of Lights holiday parade; and it donated \$1,000 to the Fischer Theatre last month.

The association paid to have the theater's marquee repainted a few months ago.

"We are still pushing the Fischer Theatre and hoping to someday have that restored," Wands said.

The group tries to help keep up with the theater's maintenance.