

2018 GREGORY STOCKARD DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Holly Stitt, Recipient

Holly Stitt jumped into historic preservation in 2012 when she and her husband took a chance on purchasing three connected buildings on Capitol Avenue that sat vacant for 11 years. They wanted a place that had historic value and was close to the downtown area. Although they did not need 30,000 square feet, they felt that this area had much potential and when the opportunity arose they took it.



This was a big investment in an historic area and changing them into an artistic complementary asset to the area became Holly's goal. She has been in construction most of her life through her Grandmother and Father, and with her passion for the arts, she felt that she could take something that was an eyesore in this beautiful area and make it a prominent anchor. Today the building houses *Scene One Theatre*, a black box theater that

promotes original scripts and performances; *Avenue HQ*, owned by Holly and Quinten Rice, which is a venue rental along with unique entertainment hosted by Avenue HQ like National Comedians, Musical Concerts, and things that just don't fit elsewhere; *The Bridge* which is a music venue that brings in national upcoming bands as well as local ones that play original music. Last, but not least, their offices are housed in the historic section of the premises at 623 E Capitol.

The complex is not the only way that Holly serves in preserving history in Jefferson City. She has joined the board of the Historic City of Jefferson (HCJ) which is in the process of rehabilitating two historic buildings. HCJ has also been integral in getting a demolition ordinance passed protecting historic buildings.

Holly is actively involved in working to revive Capitol Avenue by promoting and attending every meeting on the Capitol Avenue Rezoning and Overlay. Also providing input on the streetscape. She tries to attend every Housing Authority meeting to give input and recommendations on the blight study in the Capitol Avenue area. She is also involved in the Jefferson City East Side Business Association (ESBA). Holly works with other owners in this area find a right fit for their empty buildings. She tries to help people see beyond the building's original use and help them see what the building can become. She is a big advocate of Capitol Avenue and MSP development, and anything and everything that happens with either, she tries to be involved with.

Along with her love for buildings, Holly has a passion for the arts. She is on the Cultural Arts Commission, Interim Executive Director and past President of the Columbia Art League, does the newsletter for The Little Theater of Jefferson City, and is heavily involved in Capital Arts. She loves bringing new things to Jefferson City. By working with Quinten Rice, they have brought free concerts and awareness to Ellis-Porter Riverside Park with their Evening of the Amphitheatre event and putting on The Total Eclipse of the Park. After 4 years of events, the park is busy with other events, including a new interactive statue, so she feels they have succeeded. Now they have moved on to creating a new event called Porchfest JCMO, with Jefferson City Parks and Recreation, by placing artists, musicians and theatrical events on historic porches along Capitol Avenue. This brings awareness to artists, local talent, and the historical area.

Holly loves coming into her office every day. The place makes her happy and the block is so full of life now, a big difference from when she purchased the building. Her Capitol Avenue complex is not finished yet, with 11,000 square feet to go. Even with that, she is already looking for new buildings to renovate. It is in her blood now and she feels it is the best way of bringing up a neighborhood and to preserve its history.