

Opening Remarks at the 2018 Preservation Achievement Awards and 40 30 10 Celebration | Chris Scoville, Board Chair | October 22, 2018

Good Evening, and welcome. My name is Chris Scoville, and I'm honored to be standing here as BPA's newly elected Board Chairman. I have the honor of succeeding Leigh Freudenheim, under whose chairmanship for the past three years the organization grew and flourished. Leigh leaves us better represented, with a more powerful voice, and in the best financial condition in the organization's history. And although you'll be hearing from him soon, I'd also like to take the opportunity to recognize our Executive Director, Greg Galer, for leading the Alliance for the past six years. Not only has Greg steered our advocacy efforts in the right direction, but he's been at the center of our financial stability, and I'm pleased to report that through his efforts, we've raised over \$300,000 tonight, well above our goal.

I am here for the same reason I suspect most of you are: I love Boston. I fell in love with the city as a child, visiting from rural Connecticut with my family and on field trips. More than any other city I'd visited, Boston stood out for its human scale, the quality of its buildings and public spaces, a unique brand of chaotic order, and its respect for its history while at the same time making strides towards becoming a 21st century global city. When it came time to decide where I'd make my living after school, my admiration for Boston left no question that I'd build a career and raise a family here, and hopefully find my own small way of contributing to the city.

On that last point, I'm extremely fortunate to have found a home within the Alliance. I first became introduced to the Alliance in 2009 through my professional work with Kathy Kottaridis at Historic Boston Inc. An introduction to Greg's predecessor, Sarah Kelly, happened at an opportune time – Sarah was in the early stages of forming a group called the Young Advisors, which was intended to be a cadre of young professionals interested in preservation issues and the future growth of Boston. From its humble beginnings 10 years ago, the YAs have grown to a group of about 15 professionals representing a highly diverse skill set and industries – not just preservation and architecture, but construction, planning business, law, and engineering. The YAs have contributed their time and talent, and earlier this year under the leadership of their President, Kelly Lyons, held a wildly successful Libations for Preservation fundraising event. Beyond this, the YAs have proven to be a recruiting ground for our Board. Myself included, our current Board includes four former YAs. The point I'm trying to make is, the Alliance takes succession planning & generational change seriously. That much like the city we care about, our leadership and governance are constantly evolving, and rightly so.

This event represents a milestone for us in so many ways. Aside from being the 40th anniversary of our founding, this is the 30th awards event (the first one being held at the Custom House Tower), and the 10th anniversary of the Young Advisors. The significance of these milestones is also why we chose this venue; from here you can see exactly what we're so passionate about: the complex tapestry of a city that from above looks like a tangle of alleys, meandering lanes, and parkways, a jumble of skyscrapers,

townhouses, and museums, a web of pocket parks, squares, greenways, and urban wilds, but to us, to those of us that know Boston, that walk the streets of this city every day, there's just nothing like it; it makes sense. At its worst, the traffic, the tourists, the endless construction can be maddening (I guess we are victims of our own success), but at its best – just walk across the Longfellow bridge at sunset, stroll down Marlborough Street on a crisp fall day, circle Jamaica Pond on a misty morning, or stand atop Fort Hill after a fresh snowfall, and tell me that you don't marvel at what this city is capable of.

Look out these windows around you, and today you'll see a thriving business district with global reach. But take a step back. Less than 60 years ago, the Custom House Tower, built in 1915, was considered a skyscraper. It was a trying time for cities across the country, when leveling a city block for a parking lot, slicing an elevated expressway through the heart of marginalized neighborhoods, or bulldozing entire districts, were considered improvements. In Boston's more challenging times for much of the 20th century, the preservation movement wasn't so much about considering future growth as it was a fight to retain a shred of the city's soul, to maintain some connection to its roots.

Tonight, however, we celebrate the leaps Boston has made from these challenging times, we celebrate the fact that we are a truly global city with a thriving and diverse economy, and medical and educational institutions that are among the best in the world. At the same time we consider and show appreciation for the collective efforts we've made to stay connected with our architectural past.

The purpose of these annual awards is to recognize those among us who've shown a unique passion for striking a balance, for putting into practice the need to grow, and to temper that with a desire to respect the legacy of those who came before us, and bestowed on Boston the identity and distinctiveness we sometimes take for granted.

But the Alliance, and the Awards? They're also about engaging in conversation about how we want our city to grow. Throughout its long history, Boston has been at its best when diverse ideas are freely exchanged, where sometimes difficult conversations are had about our history, our legacy, our values, and how we want to be remembered. We recognize that the best solutions are borne out of democracy and consensus building, and not the pure exercise of power and influence.

We believe that a city that ceases to grow, to change, to accept progress is doomed to failure. Boston is not, nor do any of us want it to become, a static museum. Nor do we want it to become a sterilized preserve for the super-rich. We need more housing, especially for the middle income families that form the backbone of our economy. We need better transportation facilities. We need to grow smarter to minimize our footprint and adapt to the reality of climate change. We recognize that height and density are not inherently bad things. But, we also believe that when we build, when we grow, and when we tear things down, we are changing a system of human habitation that has developed incrementally over nearly 400 years. And while it is inevitable and sometimes necessary to disrupt that system, we at our core are committed to the notion that development should positively impact its environment. That it should be inclusive, that it should work to break down physical, psychological, and social barriers, and that it should consider the people, the environment, and the history around it. Not to set the bar too high, but we have this idea that Boston deserves a quality and sensitivity of development worthy of the names that laid the foundations on which we stand. Names like Bulfinch, Richardson, Olmsted, McKim, Lowell, and Rudolph.

The Alliance isn't alone in holding those ideals and we certainly aren't alone in wanting to ensure they're considered by those with the means to shape our city. We wouldn't have a voice, we wouldn't be listened to, we would not exist without you, our supporters, our members, our friends, our donors. We may not agree on every detail, on every merit, or even whether every project is ultimately good for our city, but we pledge to you that we will continue to work tirelessly, respectfully, and in good faith to ensure that Boston remains a place that we and future generations will be proud to call home.