

Good Evening. My name is John Krawchuk and I'm delighted to be here tonight to honor the accomplishments of Michael Devonshire and to share a few personal reflections on our time together preserving NYC and also deliver some reflections on behalf of Franny Eberhart who could not be with us tonight.

Franny relays.....(Quote)

“One doesn't grow up wanting to be a preservationist.

I didn't' either. But slid into the profession as so many do as a volunteer.

As a Holy Trinity Parishioner worshipping in a beautiful landmark church in the early 1980s I got involved in fundraising for a capital campaign to address 90 years of deferred maintenance, major water infiltration and a lot of very rotten plaster. In those days not many people practiced the craft of historic plastering – they just slapped a piece of sheetrock on an old wall and called it a day. Somehow we found the Center for Building Conservation (CBC) a place for advice but also actual hands on work. Some of you may remember the CBC, a creation of Columbia University's James Marston Fitch. They shared space with JHP's Office and it's from these humble origins that I first encountered the wise and passionate Michael Devonshire. It's been an honor to witness his commitment over the decades to the craft of historic preservation, rising to become one of the great leaders and voices for our movement.”
(End Quote)

Leap forward a few years after Franny's initial encounter with Michael, and you can visualize me as a young student in Columbia University's HP Program first meeting Michael on his legendary behind-the-scenes tour of Ellis Island. Later, as the Director of Historic Preservation for NYC Parks and Executive Director of the Historic House Trust I had distinct pleasure of working with Michael on significant public works projects including the Morris-Jumel Mansion, Bartow-Pell Mansion, Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, Van Cortlandt House, Merchant's House and The Arsenal to name a few. Michael, so many of us benefited from your generosity of spirit, sense of humor and most importantly your serious commitment to the practice and principles of historic preservation.