

Art Link and the North Dakota Heritage Center

With the passing of former Governor Arthur Link on June 1, 2010, it is fitting to pay tribute to the role that he and his wife, Grace, have played in the building of the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck. The groundwork for the construction of the North Dakota Heritage Center was established during the administration of Governor William Guy, who understood, like Governor Link, the importance of building a state museum to showcase and preserve the rich history and heritage of our state.

Link succeeded Guy as governor, and brought to the office a deep interest in North Dakota's history and heritage and the need to have a major facility to showcase our story. As Governor Guy himself said, "When Governor Link came into office, things began to move in the establishment of a North Dakota Heritage Center."

It was during Link's administration that funding was finally approved to build our state museum on the state Capitol grounds. In an interview with the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) in 2001, he said his first personal action having to do with the promotion of the Heritage Center was when he was drawing up his first budget as governor in 1973.

"Dale Moug, the state budget analyst, brought me a copy of the budget for review, and there was an item in it, a little in excess of \$2,000, that was to be transferred to the general fund," Link remembered. "I said,



Courtesy of The Bismarck Tribune

Art and Grace Link in 2005.

'What's this?' and he said, 'That's what remains of the fund drive for the Heritage Center, but that isn't going anyplace. It's an inactive fund and there's no use carrying it in the budget as a separate item. We'll just transfer it back to the general fund.' I said, 'No, I don't think we will do that. We're going to use that as seed money because we're going to build the Heritage Center because I believe in it.'"

As disappointed as Governor Guy was that a new Heritage Center did not become a reality while he was governor, he gave great credit to Governor Link in a 2001 State Historical Society interview.

"As I saw my four terms coming to a close, I despaired over having failed to generate support for a Heritage Center," remembered Guy. "Governor Link, who was inaugurated in 1973, has an abiding interest in North Dakota history and historic preservation. When he came into office things began to move in the establishment of the North Dakota Heritage Center. Governor Link had the ability to inspire legislative, corporate, and private donors. The result of his leadership is the beautiful and very functional Heritage Center. I give Governor Link massive credit for accomplishing in an orderly fashion that which we were unable to do. The building nestled on our Capitol grounds as our North Dakota Heritage Center is about as attractively inviting as a building can be."

During the extraordinary gathering of six governors on November 16, 2001, at the Heritage Center to celebrate its 20th anniversary, Governors Guy, Link, Olson, Sinner, Schafer and Hoeven all talked about the importance of preserving and telling the story of our state. But it was Governor Link who used the momentum of that anniversary as an opportunity to look to the future. He contacted each of the governors



Four North Dakota governors were on hand for the official opening of the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck May 30, 1981. Present were, from left, former Governor William L. Guy, then-Governor Allen I. Olson, and former Governors Arthur A. Link and John E. Davis. Davis died in 1990, and Link died in 2010. The North Dakota Heritage Center is the headquarters of the State Historical Society.

The Enduring Legacy – The Peoples Place



Former Governor Arthur Link, Lt. Governor Jack Dalrymple and Governor John Hoeven at the groundbreaking ceremony for the archives expansion of the North Dakota Heritage Center, September 7, 2005. It was during Link's administration that funding for the original construction of the Heritage Center was secured, and he was an active supporter of the recent effort to obtain funding for the building expansion. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, Link said that by recording the history of our state "we are demonstrating to our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren a gift of timeless value."

about supporting the idea of establishing a commission to look at the needs and wants of the State Historical Society. Governor Hoeven supported the idea and in 2002 appointed the State Historical Society of North Dakota Commission. It made a series of recommendations for additions and improvements to state historic sites across the state, and we have seen the results of many of them since. Link was right there, involved all along the way.

He was there in September 2005 when ground was broken to begin construction of the \$5.7 million addition to the State Archives that has doubled its space to continue to preserve and protect our state's treasures.

He was there in November 2007 when the ribbon was cut marking the completion of the project.

He was there during the last three legislative sessions, providing strong testimony and support about the need for the state to help fund the historic expansion of the Heritage Center.

And with him every step of the way was Grace, who is also a deep believer and strong supporter of the need to preserve and promote the unique and fascinating story of North Dakota, not only for our generation but for future generations as well.

During that 2001 interview, the State Historical Society asked Link what he considered to be the greatest value and benefit of the North Dakota Heritage Center. He said, "Pride in our state ... but most important, this is something that has a heart to it, it's a living thing. This is the peoples place."

Written in 2010 by Rick Collin, then-SHSND communications and education director, and Andrea Winkjer Collin, SHSND Foundation development consultant.



Photograph by SHSND Foundation

Completion of a \$5.7 million, 30,000-square-foot archives addition to the North Dakota Heritage Center was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony November 2, 2007. The addition doubled the space available for the state archives, where unique documents, photographs, maps, and other treasures are preserved and protected for future generations. Ribbon-cutting participants were, from left, State Senator Aaron Krauter (D-Regent), Governor John Hoeven, former Governor Arthur Link, SHSND Director Merl Paaverud, former State Senator Ed Kringstad (R-Bismarck), former Governor George Sinner, SHSND Foundation Treasurer Barbara Lang, SHSND Executive Director Virginia Nelsen, State Historical Board President Albert I. Berger, and State Archivist Gerald Newborg.

By recording the history of our state, we are honoring the memory of our parents, we are demonstrating our confidence in the professional integrity of our State Historical Society of North Dakota and its Foundation, and we are demonstrating to our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren a gift of timeless value.

— Governor Arthur Link, at the groundbreaking of the State Archives
September 2005. Honorary Trustee, SHSND Foundation

The Enduring Legacy

The Vision of Our Governors

Honoring Governors William Guy, Arthur Link, Allen Olson, George Sinner, Ed Schafer, John Hoeven and Jack Dalrymple

The Vision of Our Governors – A Decade of Progress Nearing Completion “Investing in Additional History Professionals” – Final Recommendation

In the decade since the governors laid out a vision for the State Historical Society in the new century, the bricks and mortar portions of that vision has been largely fulfilled. The archives expansion is completed, improvements have been made to historic sites across the state, and now the Heritage Center expansion is underway. But a brick, no matter how attractive, is just a brick. What makes the buildings come alive—what makes the history come alive—are the people that provide the living link between the historical treasures housed in the Society collections and their public owners. The Society, supported by the Foundation, will be requesting additional history professionals during the 2013 Legislative Session. This is the last remaining Commission recommendation and when funded will complete the governors’ vision, providing North Dakota tourism infrastructure and a modern museum to showcase the world class accomplishments of North Dakotans.



North Dakota’s governors have served as Honorary History’s Trustees, playing an important leadership role by supporting the expansion dreams of the state’s history agency. Here the governors pose before their historic November 2001 forum celebrating the 20th anniversary of the North Dakota Heritage Center, from left, William Guy, Arthur Link, Allen Olson, George Sinner, Edward Schafer, and John Hoeven.

GOVERNORS’ VISION

Governors Lead Support—Ask for Commission:

In November 2001, the former Governors asked Governor Hoeven for a Commission to review the needs of the State Historical Society.

Commission Established by Governor Hoeven:

In September 2002, the State Historical Society of North Dakota Commission was established by Governor Hoeven.

Lt. Governor Dalrymple Chairman of Commission:

After a number of meetings by the 18-member Commission, chaired by Lt. Governor Jack Dalrymple, an Interim Report was delivered to Governor Hoeven and presented to the Legislature.



Commission Recommends Seven Investments:

The Commission’s Interim Report to Governor Hoeven provided seven recommendations for the expansion of the resources of the State Historical Society. By the end of the 2009 Legislative Session, six of the seven recommendations had been funded with a combination of state and federal funds.

Phase I and II Expansion – Funded and Completed by Legislature

- Invest in legally mandated State Archives
- Invest in regional historic sites
- Invest in county and tribal historical resources
- Invest in Lewis and Clark as a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity”
- Invest in the North Dakota Heritage Center as the “Hub of History” in our state
- Invest in state-of-the-art technologies

Last Remaining Commission Recommendation:

- Invest in additional history professionals

As the expansion of the North Dakota Heritage Center is completed, new staff will be needed to meet the expanding programs and services. Society will be requesting additional staff during the 2013 and subsequent Legislative Sessions.

The Vision - Showcase World Class Accomplishments of North Dakotans

It is critical that we continue to build resources for heritage tourism in our state to tell the story of living on the plains, enhancing the quality of life for our citizens and friends, giving inspiration to our youth from the accomplishments of our inventors and innovators, and providing all citizens pride in our world-class accomplishments here in North Dakota.