



Rosemary Williams

Rosemary is a resident of Corinth, Mississippi and is married to H. L. “Sandy” Williams. They have two adult children and six grandsons. She is a graduate of the University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Science degree.

Rosemary has been active in local civic work for more than fifty years and has provided leadership and volunteer efforts for local boards, clubs and church groups. She has served on the Corinth Economic Development Team; chaired the NASA Impact Committee for the Chamber of Commerce (1988-1990) and led the marketing effort to bring more than 300 families from California, Utah and Texas to live in northeast Mississippi to work with the planned NASA Advanced Solid Rocket Motor industry. She also led the effort to save the circa 1924 Coliseum Theatre, an elegant, palatial former vaudeville playhouse and silent screen movie theatre, which was donated to Alcorn County in 1981. The former theatre now serves the community as a civic auditorium, and Rosemary has supervised restoration with mostly private funding. She organized the Corinth Area Arts Council to oversee the facility and managed the building as a volunteer for 27 years. Today, she continues to serve the Council as Executive Director. Rosemary served two terms on the Mississippi International Ballet Board of Directors, one term on the Mississippi Friends of the Arts, and has assisted with the arts in other areas.

Due to a special interest in education in Mississippi, she organized a local non-profit, Horizon, Inc., to raise private money for local school districts to provide for excellence in education and to organize volunteer tutoring programs. She served as a member of the Mississippi Public Education Forum 1991-1994 and as Co-Chairman for the first Congressional District for the Mississippi Forum on Childhood and Families, 1991-1994. Governor Haley Barbour appointed her to represent the First Congressional District on the TVA Advisory Board (2000-2002).

Historic preservation has been a special interest for approximately 50 years when she and her husband restored a circa 1870 home. About the same time she was appointed to serve on the Corinth Library Commission, which managed both the library and a city-owned antebellum home at that time known as the Curlee House. Today, the historic home is the last project of a 25-year focus on historic preservation locally, in the state, and nationally.

Rosemary has also worked as a member of the Jacinto Foundation, preserving one of the oldest courthouses in the state; the First United Methodist Chapel, the oldest church in downtown Corinth; and she and her husband have lived in Oak Home, the family home since 1974, and are the fifth generation of the Martin family to reside there. They continue to maintain and restore the home and gardens, which were built in 1857. The home is one of Corinth's National Historic Landmarks. In 2006, she and her husband bought Waits Jewelry, Mississippi's second oldest jewelry store founded in 1865 and restored the beautiful Waits building, which was built in 1870. They managed the fine jewelry and gift business until 2013.

Rosemary served twenty years on the Mississippi Department of Archives and History Board of Trustees, where she was active on various committees. She also served on the Civil War Trust Board of Trustees (a national battlefield preservation organization) for eight years.

In 1993 the city and county governments formed a joint commission to serve as a liaison between the National Park Service and the community to preserve and interpret Corinth and Alcorn County's important Civil War history. She was elected chairman and continues to serve in that position today.

The five member Siege and Battle of Corinth Commission has worked diligently with the National Park Service and partners nationwide to save National Historic Landmark sites in a more than two-decade project that has grown into one of the nation's most successful cultural historic preservation projects. The work included saving 1,000 acres of pristine battlefield land; the construction of a multi-million dollar Civil War Interpretive Center; miles of hiking and biking trails leading to Civil War battlefield sites; locating the Corinth Contraband Camp and development of the Contraband Camp Park; the development of a Trailhead Park in the historic downtown at the rail crossing which was the reason for the Battle

of Shiloh; and now working to restore and complete furnishings for the Verandah-Curlee House, circa 1857, a headquarters for both Confederate and Union Generals and where important decisions were made.

The accomplishments of this project and those of the community as it prepared for heritage tourism earned the Preserve America Presidential Award in 2008 in a White House ceremony hosted by President and Mrs. Laura Bush. Corinth was one of four honored. Rosemary accepted the award as the leader of these efforts.