

Preservation Buffalo Niagara Honorees

Category: Restoration

35 Lincoln Parkway, Buffalo Clement and Karen Arrison

The imposing Renaissance Revival mansion at 35 Lincoln Parkway, built between 1927 and 1929, was commissioned by Thomas J. McKinney, heir to a Pennsylvania oil fortune, and designed by Esenwein and Johnson, Architects.

Lavish with custom heavily-carved woodwork, stained-glass windows, carpets, tile, and masonry purportedly crafted by European artisans brought here for that purpose; sod imported from Belgium; and wrought- and cast-iron fencing and gates fabricated by Pennsylvania Iron Works, construction costs exceeded \$800,000, and furnishings cost another \$200,000, just as the market crash was about to cast a decade-long pall over the country.

Sadly, the McKinneys were killed in an automobile accident just four

years after the house was completed, and despite sale to Kirke R. Wilson in 1934 for an incredible \$110,000, the house sat empty until it was purchased by the Catholic Diocese of Buffalo for \$35,000 after Wilson's death in 1949.

Although the interior was not altered much, exterior historic features considered pagan were sandblasted and chiseled off, stained glass windows removed, and free-standing statuary sold, and in 1985 the Diocese sold the property to an antiques dealer.

Salvation arrived in 2001 when Clem and Karen Arrison purchased the property and three years later began a seven-year, multimillion dollar historic restoration. Before starting the project, the Arrisons consulted with qualified preservation architects and conservators who completed a comprehen-



sive survey and developed a restoration plan. Work accomplished according to Secretary of the Interior Standards has included the interior and exterior of main and carriage houses both roofs, masonry wall, terraced garden, stained-glass, fencing, tile, and stone. Where possible, features were repaired rather than replaced, and appropriate materials were used when replacement was necessary.

For their commitment to Buffalo's most extensive, privately funded residential restoration second only to the Martin House, Preservation Buffalo Niagara is proud to honor Clem and Karen Arrison.