

ANITA PERRY
FIRST LADY OF TEXAS
CHAIR



PAMELA WILLEFORD
VICE CHAIR

TEXAS GOVERNOR'S MANSION RESTORATION FUND

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Texas' Front Porch

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Dear Texans:

For more than 150 years, one of Texas' most beautiful and cherished landmarks served not just as a home to governors and their families, but also as a symbol of the proud history of Texas. In June 2008, the Governor's Mansion was nearly destroyed by arson. Fortunately, the house once paced by Sam Houston and graced by the Queen of England refused to surrender to the flames.

As first lady, I have been touched by the outpouring of support for the restoration of the Mansion from fellow Texans. This overwhelming response is what fueled my resolve to create the Texas Governor's Mansion Restoration Fund. Part of my inspiration to take on this project also came from remembering the faces of thousands of schoolchildren who visit the Governor's Mansion each year. The look in their eyes when they come up the walkway to the larger than life home is something magical and their Texas pride just beams.

Lending a helping hand is, and always will be, part of the Texas way. Like the true Texas spirit of 4th grade teacher Sally Hunter who, in response to the arson, began writing the ***This House is Your House*** curriculum two days after the Mansion fire. In collaboration with the Texas Education Agency, the Austin Independent School District and the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Governor's Mansion Restoration Fund will help launch ***This House is Your House*** and an array of complementary social studies lessons that will bring the Mansion alive. There is a wealth of information and countless teaching opportunities related to the Governor's Mansion, and these units are available for you to reproduce and share.

We will rebuild this historic home, so thousands of children will continue to be inspired by its history and residents, just like former Governor Dolph Briscoe, Jr. At age 9, Governor Briscoe accompanied his parents on a visit to the Governor's Mansion as overnight guests of then-Governor Ross Sterling. Spending the night in the Mansion and sleeping in Sam Houston's four poster bed stirred the statesman and rancher to fulfill his dreams and grow up to become governor.

Help me raise awareness about the history and cultural significance of Texas' most important home and use these lessons to discuss the Mansion with your fellow educators, students, friends and family. When our stately home is restored, I hope you will come and visit. The Governor's Mansion belongs not only to you and me; it belongs to all Texans.

Warmest personal regards,

Anita Perry