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U.S. Scholars Converge in Nashville to Discuss Architecture, Urban Planning & Southern Culture

Columbia University professor Kenneth Jackson's keynote address at Vanderbilt University's Ingram Hall, October 25, 6:00pm (reception 5:00pm), open to public

Scholars to study Nashville's architectural landmarks, museums & urban neighborhoods

Nashville, TN – October 17, 2007. Nashville will serve as the host site for the 25th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH) from October 25-27. “We are thrilled to bring this prominent group of scholars to Nashville for the first time,” states Ann Roberts, Executive Director of the Metro Historical Commission, which is serving as a co-host along with The Hermitage. “Attendees are traveling from around the country to learn more about Nashville’s remarkable architecture, both modern and historic. The conference starts at Robert Stern’s Nashville Public Library and ends at Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, so they will experience a wide variety of our city’s finest landmarks.”

A highlight of the conference is two days of presentations at the Nashville Public Library. “More than sixty scholars from universities around the country will participate in these engaging presentations,” states T.K. Davis, Design Director at the Nashville Civic Design Center and a conference co-chair. “Some of the presentations that may have local interest include papers on Bruce Draper, a Nashville architect who studied under Frank Lloyd Wright; preserving historic roadside architecture in East Tennessee, including a 1930s service station built in the form of an airplane; urban planning in downtown Knoxville that replaced an African-American neighborhood with a six-lane boulevard, in the 1920s; and juke joints in the Mississippi Delta.”

“This is the biggest conference that SESAHA has ever hosted,” states Robbie Jones, Director of Preservation at The Hermitage and conference chair. “It will feature representatives from over thirty universities in states from New York to Texas and some of America’s leading scholars in fields such as architecture, urban planning, historic preservation, and architectural history. The host committee has worked very hard for nearly two years to ensure that the conference is a memorable experience, particularly since it’s the 25th anniversary celebration.”

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Vanderbilt University is hosting the keynote address as part of its Chancellor's Lecture Series. Dr. Kenneth Jackson, the Jacques Barzun Professor of History and Social Sciences at Columbia University, will present "A Tale of Four Cities: New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville, and Houston in the 20th Century." Jackson will focus on planning, race, political and economic leadership in these southern cities and how their importance changed during the twentieth century.

Jackson is the editor-in-chief of the landmark *Encyclopedia of New York City* and author of *Cities in American History*, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* and other books. At Columbia, he teaches courses in urban, social, and military history. A Memphis native, Jackson also leads all-night bicycle rides, three-hour walking tours, and all-day bus tours of New York City. "Professor Kenneth Jackson is a legend in the field of urban history and with Nashville experiencing such a rapidly changing urban landscape, the timing couldn't be better," states Tara Mielnik of the Metro Historical Commission and a conference co-chair. "We are so grateful that Vanderbilt partnered with us to bring such a distinguished historian to Nashville."

Other conference events include an Opening Plenary Session at the Nashville Public Library, featuring Mayor Karl Dean, and T.K. Davis and a tour of the Tennessee State Capital with State Architect Michael Fitts. An all-day Study Tour on October 27 will feature walking and bus tours of downtown landmarks, East Nashville neighborhoods, and suburban historic sites including Tulip Grove Mansion. Guides will include local experts such as architect Kem Hinton.

Conference partners include Vanderbilt University and the Nashville Civic Design Center; sponsors include Nashville Public Library, HGTV, Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau, and The Parthenon. Members of the host committee also include Jennie McClendon at Vanderbilt, Claudette Stager at the Tennessee Historical Commission, journalist Christine Kreyling, Stephanie Spallino at the Nashville CVB, and Shanon Wasielewski with the City of Franklin.

The downtown Doubletree Hotel is the official conference hotel while presentations will take place at the Nashville Public Library. Conference registration is \$150 and includes a Business Lunch & Awards Ceremony on October 26 at the hotel and a Closing Party on October 26 at the Nashville Civic Design Center. The Saturday Study Tour is \$60 and includes lunch and a viewing of *The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* exhibit at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts as well as a tour of The Hermitage. Registration for both the conference and Study Tour is still open. Contact Tara Mielnik at (615) 862-7970 or visit www.sesah.org.

ABOUT SESAH

The Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH) is a regional chapter of the national Society of Architectural Historians and includes twelve states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia). The nonprofit organization holds an annual meeting, publishes a quarterly newsletter and an annual journal, *ARRIS*, and presents annual awards, including the "Best of the South" preservation award. SESAH was founded in 1982 at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta to promote scholarship on architecture and related subjects and to serve as a forum for ideas among architectural historians, architects, preservationists, and others involved in professions related to the built environment. The annual meeting features scholarly paper sessions, business meeting, study tours, and a keynote lecture by a national leader in the field. SESAH members come from across the U.S. and Europe.

www.sesah.org

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