Parish natives play important role

By BOBBE WEST

Family focus

Especially proud of the part they all played in the historic event.

Lavergne, originally of the Duralde area and now an internationally known artist, designed the five-paneled stone doors that tell the story of Louisiana history above the entrance doors.

Winston DeVille, a fellow of the Society of American Genealogists and noted historian of Louisiana data, has lobbied for years to get the archives established and then to obtain a proper structure to house it. He played an important role in keeping the needs of the archives before the decisionmakers.

In great measure, DeVille’s interest in such a building was influential in the final decision to construct the $10.5 million facility at 3851 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge.

Former Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards was the first to write a newspaper column treating genealogy beginning a number of years ago in Mobile, Alabama.

Lavergne, son of the late Honore Lavergne, spent his childhood in rural Evangeline Parish and left to further his education. He has taught in the Southern University Ville Platte Campus and many local residents understand and appreciate to a greater degree because of his efforts. He continues to visit his stepmother, May Lavergne, who lives near Mamou.

A competition, sponsored by the Secretary of State’s office, led to his selection as sculptor and Secretary of State Jim Brown recalled, “I was impressed with Ai’s submission from the outset. We wanted something traditional which provided a panorama of events and persons which helped shape Louisiana’s history. He exceeded more than satisfied this criteria.”

After much research and study the design of the panels was developed and formed in clay in Lavergne’s studio. These molds were then cast in a type of man-made stone. The finished product, transported back to Baton Rouge, preserved information that was crumbling away as documents covered with age and misuse. His column ‘Filles and Tales’ currently runs in The Gazette.

State Archives opens today

Secretary of State Jim Brown has announced that the new State Archives in Baton Rouge will be dedicated on Monday, August 24, 1987.

Coinciding with celebration of Louisiana’s 175th anniversary of statehood, dedication of this $10.5 million facility will be attended by over 1,000 guests, including members, past and present, of the legislature, state officials, business leaders and community leaders.

The five-panel sculpture of Louisiana’s culture and heritage.

Building is state of the art

The new State Archives building provides Louisiana with an archival facility unparalleled in the country, says internationally recognized Baton Rouge architect John D. Lavergne. Designed to be a symbol of Louisiana history as well as a storehouse for valuable documents and materials, the handsome state of the art building has the most advanced available temperature, humidity and light controls to ensure proper preservation of valuable historical records and items stored there.

A massive three story concrete vault at the core of the building will protect its contents from any disaster, including nuclear radiation, while a sophisticated security program makes the building and vaults nearly impregnable to vandalism.

Artistic sketch of the new State Archives Building located on Essen Lane in Baton Rouge. Work on the $10.5 million facility was begun in 1984.

Panel I features: the first permanent settlement in Louisiana; Port St. John Baptiste de Natchez; early explorers DeSoto and LaSalle; and colonial leaders of New Orleans.

Panel II shows: Spanish governor on a galleon; and a black iron worker and a slave market; 1854 fire and the Superdome; the 1872, the first Black congressman.

Panel IV sketches the Civil War era: the U.S. Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision; the 1861 Secession; the Confederate flag; and in 1872, the first Black governor to serve Louisiana.

Panel V focuses on the modern era: Huey P. Long, the new State Capitol; L.S.U.; the Superdome; and cultural heritages such as blues, jazz and Cajun music.

The Weekend Warrior

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