

Main Street Matters

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A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION... BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THE MAIN STREET MANAGER DOES

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A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION... BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THE MAIN STREET MANAGER DOES



By Sarah O'Brien, Texas Downtown Association Board Member

Editor's Note: Sarah served as a Texas Main Street manager for over a decade and is a proud two-time past president of the Texas Downtown Association. She has recently embarked on her Collaborative Development Collective journey in hopes of finding focus and passionately serving a new purpose.

Anice B. Read, the first lady of the Texas Historical Commission (THC), was a force to be reckoned with. Those who knew her and those who have since followed in her footsteps are better suited for success because of her tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to service to others. Millions of dollars in reinvestment, thousands of preserved buildings, and hundreds of transformed communities, are part of the legacy she left behind. Generations of Main Streeters have seen what exemplary leadership looks like thanks to Anice. Legend has it that she turned into a revolutionist after accepting the challenge of bringing Main Street to Texas. Hers is a revolutionary tale, so grand that justice nor victory can be served here alone. Perhaps this is just one entry along the way attempting to honor her legacy. Anice's excitement and energy can still be felt, if sought. Here's to working collectively together to keep the passion ignited and to her power of persuasion which is gifted to any of us who are inspired to take the journey.

Anice B. Read believed that successes of every size were to be celebrated. In that spirit of celebration, we invite you, Texas Main Street Program (TMSP) managers, to join the Texas Downtown Association (TDA) board of directors and staff in a new commitment to celebration. Imagine the possibilities if collectively we embarked on a lifelong revolutionary rally in support of TDA and TMSP. A

celebration of this magnitude would consistently shine a spotlight on Texas downtowns and the inspiring stories they have to tell. Perhaps such an event will

invoke memories that veteran managers may have forgotten, or inspire stories yet to be shared, and instill a dedication for decisive action in downtown revitalization. We envision a celebration of all Texas Main Street managers that would provide a glimpse into the future and honor our tremendous past. Celebrate. Because that's what Texas Main Street managers do. In fact, this October in Georgetown, TDA will be combining the President's Award Gala and Anice Read Auction. This event will highlight current grant fund projects and announce new grants in a one-evening celebration to better celebrate Anice's legacy.

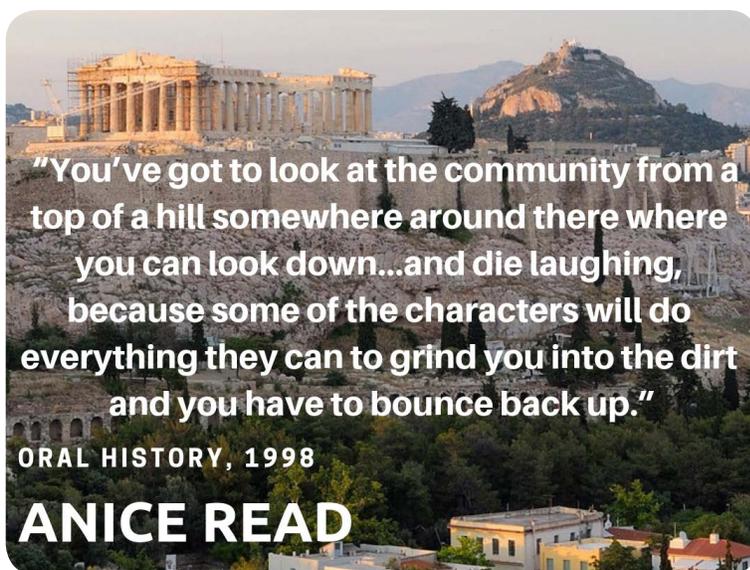
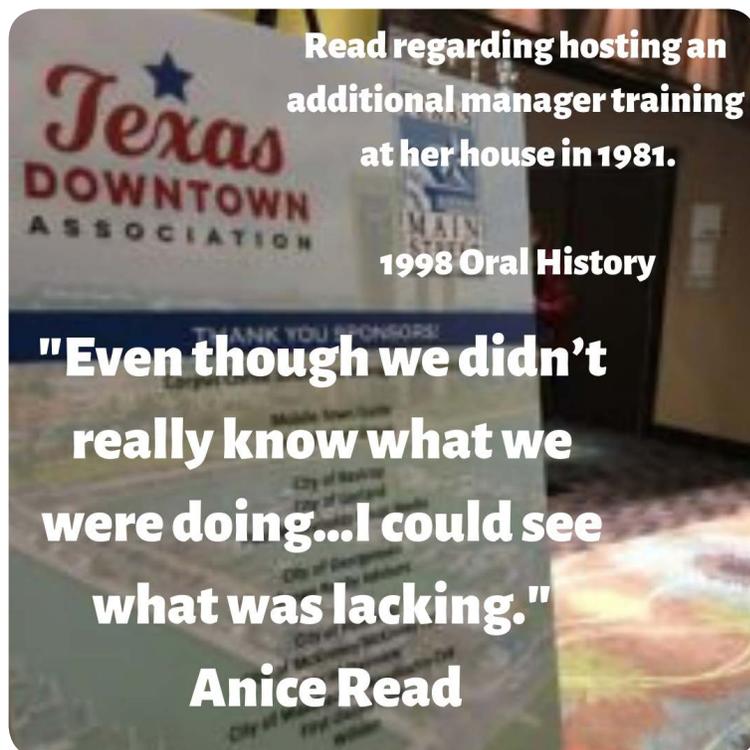
The woman responsible for bringing Main Street to Texas understood that transformational and cultural change doesn't happen in a silo. Alongside the state agency and national program, the TDA grew from a need. Originally, communities were only required to participate in the TMSP for three years, resulting in many exiting after their initial commitment was over. By 1984, three years after the program's inception, Anice realized that both the agency and local towns who exited the program would need services such as ongoing technical expertise and education. In order to ensure the TMSP remained relevant, downtown champions and advocates outside the framework of



state government were critically important. The TMSP needed a lifelong partner for the “seemingly impossible task” of assisting with downtown revitalization at every level. In 1985, a non-profit organization designed to meet those needs was born that brought together the smallest rural communities, the largest cities, and everyone in between. We like to imagine that this achievement must have been cause for an immediate celebration of success.

Education & Training: From the onset, training and education were engrained into the movement. After attending the National Trust’s initial manager training in 1981, Anice returned home insistent on providing a much more rigorous training opportunity for her Texas managers. The original “Doctor Downtown,” infamous for donning scrubs at the National Town Meetings, was adamant that managers become experts. From grant writing and public speaking, to gorilla retail recruitment and memorization of the Secretary of the Interior’s standards (because according to Anice that’s just what you had to do), Texas Main Street managers under Anice Read became downtown experts. That spirit of training, while perhaps a bit less strenuous, is still being emulated today. Summer workshop and THC’s Real Places conference are great opportunities for new managers and seasoned professionals to expand their skill sets. Anice’s training ground for experts also lives on through the annual Texas Downtown Conference and regional roundtables. Nationally recognized speakers, award-winning programs, and advanced technical know-how provide downtowners, tourism, chamber, and economic development professionals with much-needed expertise. If you haven’t attended the conference or a roundtable yet, or maybe it’s been a few years since you had the budget or capacity to attend, consider this as Anice’s whisper to inspire action, even if you have to raise the budget funds yourself (which was commonplace until the mid-90s). And we are reminded of the old adage for managers to get out of town on a regular basis. So, here’s your cause and a mission to celebrate education and successes of Texas downtowns that aren’t your own every year at one of TDA’s educational programs.

Technical Expertise: The resource team, professional staff, and the network that the TMSP provides to participating communities set them apart from other cities that are trying to bring their downtowns back to life without an established framework. New cities are always given a roadmap at the onset of their journey. Known as a



resource team visit, this practice continues to this day. During a recent visit with Julian Read, he said of his late wife, “Anice chartered her own course. She was focused. Once she set her mind to something, that was that. It was going to happen.” No truer statement reflects the persistent and unyielding mannerisms in which the fearless leader secured the support of the Rouse Company to serve during the early years of the resource visits because she believed they were essential. Anice didn’t accept “no” the first or second visit when seeking their support. Yet eventually, like so many others before them, a hesitant yes was finally given to Anice Read on her third visit. The shopping mall giants donated 15 days of corporate time annually as they sent professional

retail staff on every Texas resource team, year after year. Similar to today's teams, architects, retailers, and tourism professionals were sent in as experts. One does have to chuckle when eventually realizing that some of those experts were unknowingly being trained by Anice. She routinely secured architects with no preservation training because that's all she could find. Later, she would marvel when something like a transom window removal would appear in their work for the first time. Experts learn from people in the field, just like today's managers learn from one another. The never-ending duty of a Main Street manager is seemingly impossible. It is affected by economic and political conditions outside of one's control. It tends to be cyclical, full of extreme highs and incredible lows. Thankfully, TDA's Downtown Assessment Program is available to provide expertise tailored to a community and their current needs. An assessment should be considered an update to an existing resource team road map. Who doesn't need an injection of renewed purpose, passion, inspiration, and knowhow to address their challenges? That's exactly what a downtown assessment does. Today's team members are experts in their own right. And the honor of serving on a team is so revered in the industry that often there is a waiting list to donate your time. So, let us join you to celebrate and provide a fresh



“SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE TASK,”

ANICE READ ON THE JOB OF A MAIN STREET MANAGER
(SOUTHERN LIVING, 1990)

perspective on your community through our Downtown Assessment Program, we are sure to learn from you as well. Anice celebrated the power that outside experts had on a community's toughest critics, and so do we.

Advocacy: Lastly, no good celebration should occur without support, advocacy, and Texas sheet cake. Financial support, political capital, and downtown advocacy were critical components to the success of Texas Main Street in the early years and remain essential today. Quite honestly, the legendary cake became a proven method to secure funding from the legislature, a constant reminder to always say thank you in some way, an example of what it means to be a servant leader, and Anice B. Read's avenue to ignite a revolution in rural communities and urban cores across the state. The first



Texas Main Street cake appeared at the Capitol after the House appropriations committee slashed the program's funding. Anice placed a note on the cake that said, "This is Main Street cake. This is the quality that you'll see from the Main Street program by funding it this afternoon," and the rest is history.

Alongside the TMSP, the TDA board of directors continuously strive to foster professional excellence in downtown revitalization for our members. Our growing network of experts are armed and ready to support Main Street communities and rally behind the issues that affect the difficult work that you all do. Engagement in the TDA programs and services designed specifically to enrich Texas Main Street should be a no-brainer for today's managers. TDA is excited to rally the troops and champion the causes for celebrations happening in downtowns across the state every day. We hope that Texas Main Street cake, Anice Read's legacy, and the Texas Downtown Association become a part of all that your Main Street does to achieve success.

Special thanks to Julian Read for taking the time to meet with me to further discover the impact that his beloved wife had on Main Streets, preservation, downtowns, and the great State of Texas. - Sarah O'Brien

**APPLICATION PROCESS TO
BECOME A 2020 MAIN STREET
COMMUNITY TO OPEN SOON!**

Visit our website [here](#) for the application.

WHY SHOULD I GO TO THE SEATTLE MAIN STREET NOW CONFERENCE?



2019 MAIN STREET NOW CONFERENCE

Seattle, WA • March 25-27



Beth Duke,
Main Street Manager,
Amarillo Main Street
Program

Imagine going to a national pep rally for Main Street with 15,000 of your closest friends. That's the national Main Street experience. At my first national convention in Seattle, I was excited for the touristy attractions like Pike Place Market and the Space Needle. The best memory, though, was walking into a historic downtown auditorium and joining the Texas delegation to the music of "Downtown." Suddenly the power and impact of national Main Street became real, and I was part of the excitement. Throughout the conference, I discovered Main Streeters are more alike than different. We all have a few grumpy business owners, a few "white elephant" buildings, and the challenge of downtown parking. Networking sessions with Main Street managers from cities—big and small—proved once again that if we ask for help, someone, somewhere has a solution. The speakers are top-notch and data driven. They make sense out of all those thousands of reinvestment figures so that we can go home armed with meaningful economic development numbers. Main Street conferences have taken me to places I might never have explored—Detroit and Des Moines. I'm richer for being part of Texas and National Main Street. Go.



Beverly Abell,
Main Street Manager,
Mesquite Main Street
Program

All it takes is a quick visit to the internet to confirm what you already know: there are a lot of national conferences out there. In fact, there are so many conferences available that one could spend most of their time attending them. And yet, there is one that truly does outshine the rest, especially if you are a Main Street manager or volunteer—Main Street Now, the annual conference of the National Main Street Program. Just like any other big conference (more than 1,000 attend), Main Street Now can be a little overwhelming, especially if you are new to Main Street or this particular conference. Those who attend will have access to dozens of sessions on every subject under the sun. There will be lectures, demos, case studies, tours, and more. What do you do when there are three sessions in one time frame that you want to attend? My personal strategy is to decide ahead of time what I as a program manager need to learn right now in order to serve my community better, and what information can I take back to my community to foster our revitalization? Once I focus on a particular need or two, I select every session on those subjects that I can find. This approach has really helped me gain a deeper level of understanding of subjects that are timely, and crucial to my particular community. And yes, those bus tours are tempting. I mean, who doesn't want to go on a tour that promises shopping, wine, beer, or all three? But if you are new to the conference, forego the tours for now. Build your knowledge about the program and learn what others are doing. My personal experience is that yes, the tours can be fun, but rarely have I come out of them armed with the same amount of applicable info as I have with the classroom sessions. Finally, join in with your Texas Main Street peers, and get to know everyone. This will be invaluable to you as you continue your Main Street career and need the assistance of our second-to-none statewide network. Attending the national conference will add to your understanding of just how powerful the Main Street Approach truly is. You will have access to globally known experts and will be part of an electric atmosphere found only when you gather together with an international army of people who "get" what you do, are just as passionate, and can inspire you to achieve.



Donna Dow,
Main Street Manager,
Denison Main Street
Program

The Seattle conference will be my 22nd straight National Main Street Conference. When I began, I worked in Oklahoma and the state required us to attend each year as part of our annual agreement. When I came to Texas, I was committed to continuing this trend as it is the premiere conference in our industry. Networking, keeping up with the latest trends, and motivation are just some of the most important reasons to go. You can learn from the speakers, the vendors, and the tours. I always like to get a taste of the local flair by taking a tour that fits your needs and interests. The conference always features local or regional subject matter specialists that are only available that year while in that city. Why not learn from the best, whether it be the experts or your colleagues? And it is always great to travel with friends and strengthen relationships. Help learn how to put on the best conference ever by showing off our Texas spirit!



Julie Glover,
Main Street Manager,
Denton Main Street
Program

Networking—the more people you know, the easier time you will have moving up the ladder (if that's what you want to do), and solving your problems. We all have the same issues, whether our town is 200,000 or 2,000 people. **Solidarity**—"Unicorns unite! I am not alone!" Most of us are the only people in our town with this type of job. It helps to get together with other managers and find out that your problems are shared (and solved) by many others. Just knowing that you can call and cry on someone else's shoulder is priceless. I always get choked up at the opening session when I look around and see 2,000 people who do what I do and who love their downtowns! **Sessions**—So. Many. Sessions. These will help you in your daily Main Street manager life, and plan for your program's future. The only problem is figuring out which ones to go to. Multiple tracks at every turn! Plan wisely. **FUN**—Anice Read always said, "Get out of town every chance you get." Go have some fun, create some bonds with other managers, and find a Texas buddy that you can bounce ideas off of—like I said, we are unicorns in our towns. **Takeaways**—after every conference, I send my board the Top Ten things I gleaned from the sessions. You'd be amazed at how much they will appreciate that, and they may even help you campaign your city manager for more training. We are never too old to learn (from the Grandma of Texas Main Street!)

SUMMER TRAINING WILL BE HERE SOON!



Don't forget to mark your calendars for summer professional development.

See you in Mount Pleasant, June 10-14, 2019.

Downtown is the Mirror of Your Community

\$184.1 Million

2018 TOTAL REINVESTMENT

427

New businesses created



Private
\$116,673,551



Public
\$67,463,349

1,480

Jobs created



Texas Capital Fund Recipients receiving \$1.92 million for \$2.64 million of projects

\$2.471 Million



Dollar Value contributed to Volunteer Hours in local programs

\$4.1 Billion

SINCE 1981

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

ANGELA SMITH,
CLIFTON MAIN STREET MANAGER



1. What is your hometown?

I was born and raised in Clifton. My family is on generation six here! I lived away for about 20 years. It took about five years away to realize what an amazing community I had as a hometown, and another 15 to logistically return.

2. What Main Street city do you represent and how long have you been there?

Clifton is my Main Street city, and I've been serving as manager for two months. For the previous three years I worked for the Chamber of Commerce, so I had developed a pretty strong relationship with our Main Street Program.

3. What is your favorite spot in your downtown and why?

I have to pick just one? Hmm... The Cliftex Theatre, which is Texas' oldest continuously operating movie theatre. The Cliftex is beautifully restored, and a powerful reminder of what can be done to breathe life into historic structures. Clifton has dozens of thriving historic businesses and sites, and each holds special memories; but the Cliftex is where my daddy took me to my first cinematic experience – "Sleeping Beauty," and where I took my daughters to theirs – "The Lion King." It was the site of countless Saturday nights with lifelong friends, nervous first dates, and now the pleasure of sitting down next to an old friend to enjoy a new release or special viewing.

cont. on next page

2019 MAIN STREET ANNIVERSARIES

35

Grapevine
53,982 pop.

\$252.1 Million

30

Denison
24,380 pop.

\$47.1 Million

30

Mineola
4,686 pop.

\$32.4 Million

25

Decatur
6,721 pop.

\$9.8 Million

20

Brenham (recertified)
16,951 pop.

\$40.1 Million

20

Gladewater
6,408 pop.

\$10.4 Million

20

Greenville
27,443 pop.

\$58.6 Million

20

Taylor
16,982 pop.

\$53 Million

2018 Year-End Reinvestment

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT 2018!

“The Texas Main Street Program looks forward to another productive year in 2019 providing for Texas’ historic downtowns. From all of us, thank you for what you do.”

Texas Main Street Program Staff

4. What do you enjoy the most about the Main Street program?

What I enjoy most is serving my community by helping to bring people together to reach their goals, build a bright future, and celebrate life.

5. What is the best piece of advice you’ve ever received?

“One thing is needful.” from Luke 10:42

6. What’s your favorite tip for someone in our economic development/downtown revitalization industry?

Target your local community, developing partnerships, and supporting independently owned businesses.

7. If you could plan a vacation to anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

Texas! Sincerely. We didn’t vacation much when I was a kid, and most of my adulthood has been dedicated to getting two girls to dance classes and Girl Scouts, remodeling a 1929 bungalow, and all the daily single-parenting stuff. Sure, I’d like to see more of the U.S.; but first I want to explore Texas.

8. Who has been the most influential person in your career?

My aunt Martha. She’s my best friend, successful businesswoman, godly lady, and cheerleader extraordinaire. She keeps me centered, honest, humble, fiercely emboldened, and laughing.

9. Who would you switch places with for a day?

I don’t want to switch places with anyone. Each day is precious, and I need to be me every single day.

10. What’s your favorite inspirational quote?

I don’t have a “favorite;” it seems I’m constantly collecting inspiration; but this is one I often recall: “Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.” Albert Einstein

11. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Cooking! I love to cook—especially foods that require at least 20 ingredients and take all day to prepare. I grow most of the herbs and nuts I use, and my gardens are where you’ll find me when it’s not miserably cold outside. I’m adventurous with food, so I’m always trying new things. That said, sometimes simplicity is best. My current goal is “The Perfect Biscuit.” While supper is on the stove and I have a little time, I enjoy writing. I’ve always been a prolific reader and journalist; I’m spending more time these days practicing the art of writing.