

## EFH Rededication, Nov 17, 2021

### C Morris Remarks

Thank you, Scott. And my heartfelt thanks to you and your dedicated staff for making this event, and this momentous change, possible today in honor of Edith on her birthday. I'm so pleased to have the opportunity to be here with all of you, and to see some of my dearest Chicago colleagues and friends. I appreciate you braving the rain to join us today and to celebrate the official renaming and rededication of this icon of Modern design as the **Edith** Farnsworth House!

This represents more than a simple name change or a new logo—it's a **fundamental repositioning** of Edith Farnsworth and how we understand, experience, and interpret this place. And it's a change that embodies many of the principles of the National Trust's campaign for Where Women Made History, which at its heart is a manifestation of our commitment to tell a more truthful and equitable national story. By bringing recognition and respect to women's struggles and achievements, honoring the many ways in which they have changed their communities and changed the world, and supporting their place-based work in their own communities, we move closer to a world in which women's contributions are instinctively understood as equal, and are valued as such. This work is more important than ever as women, women of color, indigenous, and LGBTQ women continue to face deep professional and personal inequities on virtually every front.

The work of our Where Women Made History campaign takes a number of forms across many of the National Trust's programs, and it includes an imperative to re-examine our own practices, including the ways in which women's historical roles and contributions have been consistently overlooked and undervalued in connection to place. As I like to say, **EVERY** place has a woman's story to tell. And that very much applies to the National Trust's own collection of 29 Historic Sites, several of which had women in pivotal roles as owners, clients, patrons, archivists, conservationists, or preservationists.

It's our responsibility to identify and elevate these women as a central and **integral** part of the narrative at these historic places, whether they were an influential "shadow president" during a time of crisis, like First Lady Edith Wilson; a landholding Mexican matriarch like Encarnacion Vallejo Cooper, who helped establish the young city of Monterey, CA, and whose rancho, the Cooper Molera Adobe, was passed down through generations of women in her family; or the enslaved women of African descent whose labor formed the foundation of plantation life and the plantation economy, like Louisa Bryant who spent the majority of her life in service of the plantation's owner, Mary Weeks.

Scott and his staff have been at the forefront of the efforts to center women at our Historic Sites--along with Professor Nora Wendl, the author of this illuminating new commemorative booklet on Edith. Together they have presented nearly two years of thought-provoking programming and interpretation that demanded a long-overdue re-evaluation of Edith Farnsworth and how she both influenced and inhabited this space. Today's rededication is the culmination of that work. Officially renaming this internationally known site as the "Edith Farnsworth House" ensures that the patron and owner will forever be squarely at the center of the story, **where she belongs**. And it's my hope that Edith's presence, her willingness to challenge societal norms, her tenacity, and her creativity will inspire the next generation of young women and men who encounter her here, to reconsider what women have done and what they are capable of doing.

And now, it's my pleasure to introduce Fairbank Carpenter, nephew of Edith Farnsworth, to say a few words.