



LES AMIS



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For further information, please call:
Jane Bernbach, 917-544-5506
Jessica London, 212-759-6846
Elizabeth Gentry Sayad, 314-367-4030

**NEW ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCED BY THE MID-MISSISSIPPI RIVER VALLEY'S
LES AMIS ("THE FRIENDS")
AND INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION ORGANIZATION,
FRENCH HERITAGE SOCIETY**

ST. LOUIS, MO....LES AMIS, the Mid-Mississippi Valley's Creole cultural preservationist organization and FRENCH HERITAGE SOCIETY, which supports French architectural patrimony in both the United States and France, will enjoy a new association.

Robert Fulstone, President of Les Amis, and Jane Bernbach, French Heritage Society's Special Projects Coordinator for Ste. Genevieve and the liaison between FHS and the mid-Mississippi River Valley's Creole heritage, made the announcement jointly at Les Amis' Annual Meeting on May 24 at the Racquet Club/Ladue in St. Louis County.

The two organizations share the common goals of preserving the best of France's legacy from its once great empire in the New World which extended from Quebec down the St. Lawrence Valley to the Mississippi River Valley and finally to the Gulf of Mexico. Les Amis' perimeters are defined by the region extending from Cahokia-Chester, Illinois on the east bank of the river and from Ste. Genevieve-St. Louis on the west bank. This Creole District was just nominated a UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE on April 1 for the first stage of what will be a formal international approval process. French Heritage Society, founded in 1982 with a mission to preserve architecture in the United States and in France, has provided over 10 million dollars, including matching funds, to the restoration of more than 400 significant monuments including châteaux, churches, historic buildings and gardens, and continues to support meaningful educational exchanges between the two countries.

Following the Great Flood of 1993, Les Amis was organized to help maintain and support the threatened Amoureux House in Ste. Genevieve which had been given to the state of Missouri. French Heritage Society (then called Friends of Vieilles Maisons Françaises) helped to raise funds in Paris, Washington, D.C., and St. Louis for the purchase of this 18th century historic property in connection with the Missouri Committee of the French Heritage Relief Committee formed during the summer of the flood. Elizabeth Gentry Sayad who was the Founding President of Les Amis in 1994 and currently serves as Chairman Emeritus remarked: “How appropriate and wonderful it is that 14 years after our initial partnership brought about by disaster, that Les Amis and French Heritage Society can begin to work together on future projects in a positive, productive climate.”

Princesse Marie-Sol de La Tour d’Auvergne, President of French Heritage Society, which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary, added: “French Heritage Society has always been committed to restoration efforts in Ste. Genevieve and over time has raised more than \$100,000 to secure the French architectural patrimony in the region. FHS has worked diligently to create partnerships with associations that share our mission. In France, we have strong alliances with La Demeure Historique, Les Vieilles Maisons Françaises and Le Comité des Parcs et Jardins de France to raise funds for projects in France, and I am truly delighted that we are able to join forces on a local level in this important region with Les Amis. This association represents another meaningful alliance which FHS has developed nationally to safeguard architectural treasures in the United States.” Others include the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Historic New Orleans Collection, the Florence Gould Foundation and the American Architectural Foundation.

In honor of the occasion, Jane Bernbach, former Executive Director of French Heritage Society, announced the first joint venture between FHS and Les Amis. A grant of \$25,000 will be awarded for the restoration of the Chatillon-DeMenil House with matching funds to be raised by the Chatillon-DeMenil House organization. Les Amis helped identify the project and will assist in raising the grant funds together with the Paris Chapter of FHS. The antebellum mansion, overlooking the Mississippi River in south St. Louis, represents the importance of French settlement in St. Louis from the early fur trade past the Civil War period. The grant is specifically targeted for the restoration of the front/east portico, columns and roof.

Both Les Amis and FHS are 501(c)(3) organizations with active memberships. FHS has fourteen chapters in the United States and one in Paris, France. Members enjoy programs related to the FHS mission as well as numerous opportunities to visit targeted sites in France and in the U.S. Les Amis members enjoy monthly programs followed by receptions throughout the year, regional field trips and group tours to other cities. For further information about membership at the St. Louis office, please contact Susan Rowe at the Arts and Education Council, 314-289-4004 or susan-r@keeparthappening.org. For membership information at the FHS office in New York City, please call 212-759-6846 or visit its website, www.frenchheritagesociety.org.