



Highlands Historical Society

Fall 2026

To preserve and promote the rich heritage of Highlands

Highlands, N.C.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Our beloved Dollie Swanson joined the Board in 2021. She chairs our Landscape Committee and as she puts it "I've been a dirt gardener all of my life". Her gardening "roots" run deep. Her grandmother was a founder of the Garden Club of Georgia and the Peachtree Garden Club. Dollie was the Horticulture Chair for Peachtree and a Horticulture Judge for Garden Club of America flower shows across the country. Under her guidance this year HHS has updated all of our campus landscaping to include native plants.



We Have a New Logo!



The Highlands Historical Society has a new logo! Drop by our museum to pick up a free logo sticker and fridge magnet!

From the Murky Depths of Lake Sequoyah

In February 2015, Lake Sequoyah was lowered for dam repair. While walking the banks of the drained lake, Chip Wisdom discovered an old boat half buried in the sand. Its origin was a mystery except to anyone who had known Furman Vinson. Eighty-five years earlier, in 1930, Kenyon Zahner had hired Joe Webb and Vinson to build a cabin on the edge of the new Lake Sequoyah west of the Big Creek Bridge. To create a boat landing underneath the cabin, Vinson built a boat to remove the dirt. Unfortunately he overestimated the boat's capacity, and the boat sank after Vinson over filled it. This boat is the only artifact associated with the Zahner cabin, one of 36 Joe Webb Cabins, that unfortunately burned in 1971. Chip's discovery prompted local Highlanders and HHS to retrieve and preserve it on the HHS campus. For years it was mounted outside of our museum. A generous donor allowed us to move it to the Bug Hill Tent Cottage and better preserve it with a plexiglass encasement.



HHS Roaring 20's Gala was a Roaring Success

On August 16th, Highlands Historical Society held its annual fundraiser. Event Co-chairs Patty Jones & Annette Waldon transformed the Sequoia Room at the historic Highlands Inn into a speakeasy for the ages. Over 150

attendees donned their 1920's finest to eat, drink and dance the night away. Proceeds from the raffle and silent auction support local student scholarships. Many thanks to our amazing event planners, volunteers, sponsors and attendees.



President's Letter - Summer 2026

Greetings from beautiful Highlands. As I write this letter I just opened the window in my study with a gush of cool air reminding me of one of the many reasons we love Highlands. Fall is definitely in the air!

We have had the best year at HHS. Thank you to the many who attended our Roaring 20's Gala in August. This sold out event was a "roaring" success by every measure. Board Members Patty Jones and Annette Waldon and their many volunteers did an amazing job in transforming the Sequoia Room at the Highlands Inn into a Great Gatsby movie set. Proceeds from the Gala will fund high school scholarships for 2027. Our Walk in the Park event in October was fantastic. Many thanks to our "ghost" actors for bringing Highlands history to life by portraying key historical figures. Board Members Lee Lyons and Joan Worthy and their volunteers did a great job in making this year's event a success. HHS participated in the Heritage Jamboree in September. Board Members Jack Wotton and Karen Price greeted visitors and set up our moonshine still. And finally the HHS campus hosted several Porchfest artists. We had a huge crowd. Thanks to Western Carolina Brew & Wine for providing food and beverages.

We just expanded our landscape renovation project. Many thanks to Board Member Dollie Swanson for spearheading this effort and to our generous partners: Chattooga Gardens Nursery, Main Street Nursery, Highlands Lawn & Garden, Cattails of WNC Landscape Services and The Summer House by Reeves. Also a big THANK YOU to Mountain Findings, Laurel garden club, and the Cullasaja Women's Outreach for their generous grants!

Looking ahead to 2027, we are excited about some ambitious projects such as making our archives accessible on line and re-painting the Museum and Prince House. These projects are made possible through your generous support. As noted investor John Templeton said, "The best investment with the least risk and greatest dividend is giving". Thanks to all of you who have generously supported HHS in the past and please make HHS part of your annual giving. Our mission of preserving and promoting Highland's history would not be possible without you.

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and looking forward to seeing you next year.

Historically yours,
Price Kloess, MD, President

Board and Staff

Price Kloess, President
Patty Jones, Vice-President
Carlton Cole, Treasurer
Mike Thompson, Secretary

Directors: Dollie Swanson, Lee Lyons, Annette Waldon, Jerry Wilson, James Yaskiewicz, Joan Worthy, Jack Wotton, Karen Price

Ex Officio: Tracy Foor, Harry McDonald, Obie Oakley

Staff:

Ran Shaffner, Archivist Emeritus
Mary Jane McCall, Docent/Bookkeeper
Cora Bauman, Archivist, Executive Assistant

The 2026 Annual Walk in the Park event



Our "ghosts" were (L to R) Randy Lucas (portraying Judge Felix Alley), Ron Leslie (Bennie Rogers), Brian McClellan (Uncle Billy Potts), Sandie Trevathan (Mary Chapin Smith), April Getz (Annie Whip) and Craig Eister (Fred Allen).

Highlands Historical Society held its 2026 Walk in the Park Event this fall on October 3 & 4. Attendees heard from local volunteers acting as the 'ghosts' of important individuals from Highlands' history. Our audience got to hear each ghost tell the stories of the six Highlands residents who exhibited the spirit that made Highlands the unique place that it still is today. Thanks to our actors, Committee Chairs Lee Lyons and Joan Worthy, and volunteers for making this a wonderful event.

The Highlands Historical Society would like to thank the following organizations for their generous grants in 2026:

The Cullasaja Women's Outreach
Mountain Findings
The Laurel Garden Club

Porchfest



Highlands Historical Society was a host site for Porchfest 2026. A large group of bluegrass music lovers were treated to the sounds of Charles and Layla Wood. Many thanks to Western Carolina Brew & Wine for supplying beverages for our event.