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PW&E NEWS

Sam is Back

Sam Houston was returned to his prominent position in Hermann Park in early September and given a hero's welcome. The homecoming party September 5, was attended by Mayor Bob Lanier, his wife Elyse, Public Works & Engineering Director Jimmie Schindewolf, P.E., city officials and other dignitaries.

The 71-year-old statue was removed from its pedestal in July for renovations. The PW&E's Facilities,

Engineering and Construction Division, under the tutelage of Assistant Director Dave Peters, oversaw the restoration. The actual conservator was S.A.T., Inc. of New York. Other principal participants were the Parks Department, the Houston Municipal Arts Commission and the Houston Endowment.

"This was a unique project in which the public and private sector worked to-



Assistant Director Dave Peters and Director Jimmie Schindewolf flank Artie Lee Hinds of the Houston Municipal Arts Council. All were instrumental in getting the Sam Houston monument restored.

gether to preserve a part of Houston's history," Peters said.

The original efforts to place a memorial to Sam Houston began as early as 1916 with John Kirby and Judge Norman Kittrell. Their attempts to make their plans a reality were temporarily halted because of World War I.

Beginning in February, 1923, the Women's Club of Houston began raising funds. According to Historical Research and Documentation prepared by J.K. Wagner and Company, the Women's Club began raising the necessary \$75,000 for the monument by "giving teas, parties, selling tickets and hosting a ball donated by Al McFaddin."

During the summer of 1923, the club advertised for sculptors to submit models and drawings. A panel of judges, including Governor Pat Neff, picked Houstonian E. Cerracchio to erect the Houston statue.

In undertaking the restoration, none of Cerracchio's original plans could be found, so Peters said department employees recreated three dimensional drawings as part of the project. Renovations on the statue included the base of the monument as well as the statue.

"In fact, the monument was not pinned together as we expected it to be," Peters said, "So during the reconstruction we pinned the monument granite together with stainless steel pins."

With proper maintenance, Peters said it should be another 70 years before the monument undergoes another extensive restoration.

- J. Overton