

NAR CENTENNIAL GALA
Wednesday, May 14
Marriott Wardman Park – Marriott Ballroom
FULL Script (5/06/08)

7:00 p.m.

[Hosted Reception]

EBBY HALLIDAY

7:45 p.m.

Voiceover: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our Honorary Chair for tonight's Centennial Gala celebration, from Dallas, Texas, Ebby Halliday...

Good evening, and happy anniversary to all REALTORS®! I am glad so many of you could join us tonight for this very special, once-in-a-lifetime event.

One hundred years ago tonight, 120 extraordinary real estate men left the Chicago YMCA, after creating the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges.

They had no idea that the humble organization they started would become our National Association of REALTORS® -- THE Voice for Real Estate in America – and change the course of our industry and our nation for generations to come.

Tonight, we celebrate a century of innovation, professionalism, service and success, and we plan to show you just how proud we are to be members of this great national institution.

Before we get started, we must first pay tribute to our great United States of America. I would like to invite 1988 NAR President Nestor Weigand to lead us in the pledge of allegiance...

[Nestor leads pledge.]

Thank you very much, Nestor.

We also have a fine group of singers to perform the National Anthem, followed by a special song – The REALTORS® Song – written by Orley Iles in 1954 for the Phoenix Real Estate Board. The words are in your printed program if you'd like to follow along.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Bachelor Party....

[Jim Helsel escorts Ebby off stage. Bachelor Party performs National Anthem - made official anthem in 1931- and REALTOR® Song - created in 1954]

DALE STINTON

7:58 p.m.

Voiceover: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome NAR's Chief Executive Officer, Dale Stinton.

Good evening! Wasn't that performance fantastic? Let's give another round of applause to these fine gentlemen...

[applause]

I also want to thank Ebby Halliday for serving as Honorary Chair, and for sharing her thoughts and perspectives yesterday at 59 1/2 Minutes.

Thank you, Ebby, for all you have done to advance our industry and this great organization over the last 60 years.

I would also like to thank Systems Engineering, the Real Estate Buyers Agent Council, and SRES, for sponsoring tonight's Gala and for their continued support of REALTORS® throughout the year. Please be sure to stop by their booths to say “thank you” in person.

[On screen: Systems Engineering Booth 108, REBAC Booth 1713, SRES Booth 1811.]

Now, before we enjoy this wonderful dinner, please welcome our 2008 Treasurer, from Lemoyne, Pennsylvania, Jim Helsel, who will give the Invocation.

JIM HELSEL

8:00 p.m.

Thank you, Dale.

Please bow your heads in a moment of silence for those REALTORS® who have gone to a better place...

And take an extra moment spent in silence respecting all individuals, focusing especially upon our military and civilians working to bring peace to the world.

Dear Lord,

We come before you this evening to ask that you place your hands upon us and bless the REALTOR® family. We recognize we have done this many times before often selfishly asking for things many of us openly want and sometimes secretly desire.

Today, bless our hearts and minds in a way that will give us the will to do the job you ask of us each day.

Grant our REALTOR® family a heart that brings help to the homeless, strength to the weak and compassion to others less fortunate than those of us in this industry – one that has made so many of us rich with much more than we deserve.

We also pray that you bless our governing body during these meetings, giving each of us an honorable reason during debate and proper respect toward each other, so that we are able to reach decisions that we may ALL be proud of, as we leave for our own homes.

We appreciate all of the blessings and successes we have enjoyed during the past 100 years. May this celebration of the past inspire us to do what it takes to help REALTORS® succeed for the next 100 years. And may this organization – and all who lead it – have the strength and character to tackle all challenges and direct our members toward opportunities and prosperity in the months and years ahead in a manner that is pleasing to you.

Finally, we ask that these blessing be bestowed upon each of us, in the name of all faiths – AMEN.

Please enjoy the dinner – we'll begin our program in about an hour.

[Soft, live music to be played during dinner - will do songs from the century from Irving Berlin and Cole Porter to Sinatra, Bacharach and the Beatles. Jim returns to podium at 9:15 p.m.]

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you have enjoyed your dinner. Now, it is time to begin our very special program. To help kick things off, please welcome your 2008 First Vice president from Tucson, Arizona, Vicki Cox Golder.

VICKI COX GOLDER

9:15 p.m.

Thank you, Jim, for that warm introduction.

And, Ebby, thank you for serving as our Honorary Chair. Your presence tonight, as always, is an inspiration to us all.

REALTORS® have always known that 1908 was a pivotal year for our industry and profession.

But what many of us do not know is just how consequential 1908 was to our entire nation.

From air flight, to motorized transportation, 1908 was a year for acting on big dreams. And perhaps no one understands this better than the author of the new book, "AMERICA 1908," Jim Rasenberger.

In his book, Jim explains that major historical events rarely occur in a single time frame, such as a calendar year.

Yet, that is precisely what makes 1908 stand out – so many events that occurred during this one 12-month span of time had a lasting impact on our nation. They are a testament to the adventurous spirit of the year when NAR was born.

“AMERICA 1908” is Jim Rasenberger’s second book. His first, “HIGH STEEL,” gave us an inside look at the men who accepted great risk to build the skyscrapers that made America famous.

Jim also is a frequent contributor to the New York Times, which happens to be his hometown paper.

We are fortunate to have this noted historian here with us tonight to talk about NAR’s role in the year that made America great.

REALTORS[®], friends and families, please join me in welcoming Jim Rasenberger...

[JIM RASENBERGER gives 10-15 min. presentation about why 1908 was such a pivotal year, then specifically about real estate and the start of the organization. Vicki returns to podium at the conclusion of his remarks.]

Thank you, Jim, for that insightful look at the NAR’s founding year.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to welcome your 2008 President-Elect from Irving, Texas, Charles McMillan...

CHARLES

9:30 p.m.

Thank you, Vicki, for that kind introduction.

Happy 100th anniversary NAR! I have never been more proud to be a REALTOR[®] than I am right now. The REALTOR[®] spirit is something special.

Playwright George Bernard Shaw once said, “Life is no brief candle to me. It is a splendid torch which I hold for the moment. I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”

For 100 years, NAR has carried a splendid torch that has burned brightly from one generation to the next.

Tonight, let's take a few minutes to explore what this torch has meant to each generation of REALTORS[®], and how each generation has helped it grow, lighting the way for more Americans.

120 real estate professionals first lit the NAR torch in Chicago, when their burning desire to bring professionalism to the real estate sparked the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges.

This first generation of NAR members defined our national organization in two key ways.

In 1913, they adopted the very first "Code of Ethics" which provided clear guidelines for conducting business in an upright manner.

Although other respected professions subscribed to an ethical code, such as the physician's Hippocratic Oath, applying such a standard to real estate was a revolutionary idea.

The code of ethics lit the path for our fledgling national organization, and it continues to define who we are today. It is what sets members of NAR apart from other real estate licensees.

The other way that our founders defined NAR membership was through our name.

One member, Charles Chadbourne, read an article with the headline "Real Estate Man an Embezzler." He decided it was time for honest real estate professionals to distinguish themselves with the name "REALTOR[®]."

Since our early days, members of the National Association of REALTORS[®] have had the exclusive right to this title. Today, consumers are more aware than ever that we uphold higher standard of practice than non-REALTORS[®], and they agree that we are their first and best choice in the transaction.

Our founding members laid the groundwork for our success, but the torch did not stop with them.

The next generation of REALTORS[®], carried it high, as they made significant progress in advancing homeownership opportunities and private property rights.

During the Great Depression, REALTORS[®] worked closely with the federal government to create the Federal Housing Administration in 1934.

REALTORS[®] also influenced the creation of the Federal National Mortgage Association or, as it is now called, Fannie Mae, in 1938, and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, or Freddie Mac, in 1970.

From the founders on, NAR also has educated the public about the benefits of private property ownership.

Our strong advocacy has earned us the title “Voice for Real Estate,” and today we stand today as the most powerful lobbying group in Washington, carrying the torch for more than 1.2 million members and all those we serve.

The next generation of REALTORS[®] carried the torch in a new direction – sparking the creation of a multiple listing service that would re-define the transaction.

It’s hard to imagine that there was time when the MLS didn’t exist. In many countries around the world, unfortunately, this is still the case.

Yet, decades ago, NAR members had the foresight to create a system that would ensure the orderly exchange of property. Today, that system continues to evolve and grow, and it would be impossible to conduct business without it.

With greater cooperation in our industry, the next generation of REALTORS[®] was able to light the path to homeownership for even more people across the country. And, our focus on equal opportunity for all grew by leaps and bounds.

In 1988, NAR shepherded the adoption of important amendments that brought greater flexibility and enforcement to the Fair Housing Act.

In 2001, NAR joined with our diversity partners to launch the HOPE Awards. The HOPE Awards is sponsored by a partnership of real estate associations and honor those who work every day to close the divide in the American dream and help make the face of homeownership in this country look more like America.

Winners receive a \$10,000 honorarium, national media coverage, paid travel expenses to attend and speak at a minority housing symposium. Next year, we will recognize our fifth class of HOPE winners, right here in Washington, D.C. I am looking forward to that wonderful celebration.

Throughout all generations, the NAR torch also has brightened each and every community across our nation – and in countries across the world – as REALTORS® have used our special commitment and dedication to improve life for others.

From our everyday involvement in housing issues, to extraordinary Good Neighbors, to providing relief in time of need, we have made our cities and town stronger.

As we look at the past 100 years, and all of the lives we have touched, it is clear that we have made a lasting impact on our profession, our laws, our communities and our nation.

Our success is a testament to you, and to all of the members, who have guided us during this first century.

Tonight, as we mark our first Centennial, it's time to hand the torch to a new generation of REALTORS®. I have no doubt that, with you leading the way, our splendid flame will burn brighter than ever before in 2008 and beyond.

I can think of no better person to carry our torch into our second century of service than our 2008 NAR President, Dick Gaylord...

DICK

9:40 p.m.

Thank you, Charles. And I especially want to thank you for your tremendous work with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac the past couple of weeks. Your work will benefit Realtors and homeowners across the entire country.

Before we turn our attention to the future of our industry, I want to recognize a wonderful woman who has done so much to shape our profession for more than six decades – someone that we all adore.

When we decided to have a Centennial Gala, there is only one person the Leadership Team could imagine serving as Honorary Chair – Ebby Halliday. She is one-of-a-kind – a true pioneer in our business.

At a time when women were just starting out in real estate, Ebby paved the way for others to succeed in our profession. She helped found the Women’s Council of REALTORS[®], and she was the first woman to be named REALTOR[®] of the Year by the Texas Association in 1963.

Ebby also has received a long list of honors for her selfless contributions to her community, the state of Texas, and our nation. In 2005, she became the first woman in real estate to receive the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans Award for overcoming adversity to achieve success.

I am so very grateful that Ebby agreed to participate in our Gala this evening – and I am even more grateful to count her as my friend.

At this time, I invite our 2008 Immediate Past President, Pat V. Combs, to present Ebby with a very special gift...

[Pat Combs presents pin to Ebby at head table.]

Ebby, to thank you for all you have done, we are honored to present you with this specially designed, centennial pin, created just for you. Like this pin, you are beautiful and one of a kind – an example for all generations.

[applause]

As Charles mentioned, when the founders of this great organization came together on May 12th, 1908, they had an ambitious agenda. Today, all REALTORS[®] stand on the shoulders of these giants – and the generations that followed.

Thanks to all of the men and women who have proudly called themselves REALTORS[®] over the past century, we have shaped a real estate industry that is truly the envy of the world.

It is REALTORS[®] who have made ethical conduct a staple of our business by adopting and enforcing a strict Code of Ethics. In doing so, we have helped protect millions of consumers from unfair business practices.

It is REALTORS[®] who have worked in cities across America to build stronger communities through Habitat for Humanity, REALTOR relief for Katrina and the Tsunami in Southeast Asia, and thousands of other numerous of community service programs.

It is REALTORS[®] who have helped raise the homeownership rate to nearly 70 percent, advocating for laws and policies that protect private property rights and make housing more affordable and accessible.

It is REALTORS[®], who have innovated, decade after decade, to make the transaction faster and easier – creating a Multiple Listing Service that protects consumers and using the Internet to provide new information and services.

And, yes, it is America's REALTORS[®] who have always promoted competition in the market by encouraging new business models and by keeping large banks out of real estate.

These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and dedication of those who came before us. Now, it is our turn to set our

agenda for the next 100 years, and determine our legacy for generations to come.

Just as 1908 was the year that sparked great innovation and hope across America – I believe 2008 will be the year that REALTORS® bring a new spirit of innovation and hope to the real estate market and our nation.

Just imagine the possibilities...

What could we do for consumers and our markets if we had information about every single property in the United States available at our fingertips?

How strong would our economy and our local markets be if consumers and REALTORS® stood together, united as one voice, beyond the transaction to shape laws and policies that protect the benefits and value of real estate?

How much time and energy could we save in the transaction, if we had access to some of the greatest technology minds in the country?

And, how much could we grow our businesses, if we had access to financial resources and tools that fit our unique needs – no matter where we are, or what time it is?

Ladies and gentlemen, these are not just idle visions – these are realities that you will experience, when NAR unleashes our Second Century Initiatives in the coming years. And, best of all, they are just the beginning. How far our torch travels and how brightly it burns depends on each and every one of us.

Looking at our past 100 years, we have shown just what REALTORS® can do when we work “All Together.”

When future generations gather to commemorate our Second Century, I am certain that they will see 2008 as a turning point for our organization and the real estate business. And, they will stand proudly on our shoulders.

As we conclude our wonderful celebration, I ask that you join me in a toast...

First, to Ebby and the legacy she and her fellow REALTORS® have left for us. Ebby, may your 100th birthday be just as spectacular as you are. Cheers!

And, finally, to “AMERICA: 2008” – This is the year that REALTORS® define a new era for the American Dream. There is nothing we can’t accomplish “All Together.” Cheers!

Thank you all for celebrating with us tonight. Enjoy the rest of the meetings!

9:45 p.m.

Adjournment