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Thanks: Great lecture, great gesture

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To the editor:

I would like to recognize and thank Jim McAllister of Derby Square Tours for his extraordinary lecture and for his great generosity toward the Essex National Heritage Commission.

On Thursday, June 30, Jim held a widely attended lecture titled "Love Song for Salem: A Visual Tribute." At the end of a remarkable presentation of heartfelt recollections, Jim generously donated a large portion of the evening's proceeds to Essex Heritage.

We have always known that Jim, as the recipient of the 2008 Essex Heritage Hero Award, has a strong commitment to local history and preservation, but he went above and beyond by also contributing funds to the Essex Heritage mission. I cannot express how deeply appreciative we are of his support for our efforts to preserve, promote and enhance the region's great historical, cultural and natural resources.

Jim's lecture was a wonderful compilation of sites, people and events across time in Salem. His personal experiences and stories throughout his years in Salem had everyone in the audience alternating between laughter and tears. It was a remarkable event.

We thank Jim for making history come alive! We thank the National Park Service for providing the theater space at its Salem Visitor Center. And we thank all of you who attended for making it such a special evening.

Annie C. Harris

Executive Director

Essex National Heritage Commission

Salem