

ART ON THE BAYOU



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*SUPPORT THE NEW KENSINGER PLAZA &
PERMANENT HOME FOR "SMOKESAX" - ONE OF
HOUSTON'S MOST ICONIC CULTURAL LANDMARKS!*



BOB WADE'S SMOKESAX, 1983

ONE OF HOUSTON'S CULTURAL ICONS

Bob Wade's "Smokesax" is a towering blue saxophone made from Gulf Coast oilfield pipe, a Volkswagen Bug, beer kegs, surfboards, hubcaps, lights, and cattle feeders, and is one of the best examples of Wade's signature larger-than-life artistic style. Originally commissioned by prominent businessman Phil Kensinger for his Billy Blues Bar, Wade's "Smokesax" served as an important Houston landmark for over 20 years, in its previous location along Richmond Avenue.

In 2012, the Kensinger family donated the monumental sculpture to the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art, citing the organization's long standing commitment to preserving Houston's cultural icons - **The Beer Can House** and **The Orange Show Monument**.

Now, the OSCVA is honored to announce plans for the new permanent home for Bob Wade's "Smokesax", and the creation of Kensinger Plaza located along the **Bayou Greenways Trail system at Fondren Park in Houston's East End**. As the first piece of public art on Brays Bayou, the sculpture's new location, as well as its sheer scale, will inspire Houstonians to gather and create for many years to come.



About Bob Wade

For more than 40 years, Bob "Daddy O" Wade built whimsical outsized public art that nodded to the Texas culture of "bigness." Bob Wade, who passed away in 2019, helped shape the 1970's contemporary counter-culture art landscape. He is well known throughout the country for his artwork, including his 40 ft. long iguana sculpture, "Iggy", now in Fort Worth Zoo and the world's largest cowboy boots in San Antonio. Wade's works have been exhibited at The Whitney and are in the permanent collections of The Menil and MFAH among others.



BUILDING KENSINGER PLAZA IN HONOR OF THE KENSINGER FAMILY



Kensinger Plaza will be a newly constructed feature along Houston's Bayou Greenways trail system, located on Brays Bayou, just minutes from the University of Houston, The Orange Show Monument, and Smither Park. Kensinger Plaza will serve as a gathering spot and resting place for our community, as well as a cultural beacon for all who use the trail system. Kensinger Plaza will be the new permanent home for Bob Wade's major public artwork "Smokesax," and will also include a stage for performances curated by OSCVA, benches, and other amenities.

Honoring the Kensinger Family Legacy

Stuart and Angie Kensinger spent their lives growing a loving family with their son, Philip, and giving back to Houston. Angie coached and mentored the most successful lacrosse team in the country at St. Johns School. For 22 years, "Coach K" built up young women in a program that was profoundly more than a lacrosse team: it was a loving community who supported and valued each other and whose generations of players still remain close to this day. Stuart's commitment to *Project Row Houses* and *Camp for All*, illustrated his life-long passion for helping communities thrive. The Kensingers understood that public art and gathering places create opportunities for neighborhoods to grow and flourish.

In 2012, when the Kensingers donated "Smokesax" they requested that the sculpture carry a dedication to Stuart's father Phil Kensinger. To honor that commitment, Kensinger Plaza will be a monument to their legacy as community builders, as well as express the depth of emotion over their tragic and untimely loss.

