

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Waterwall in Houston, Texas. The wall is a large, curved concrete structure with water cascading over it. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark, moody color palette. In the top left corner, the text "HOUSTON★CHRONICLE" is displayed in a white, sans-serif font, with a small yellow star between the words.

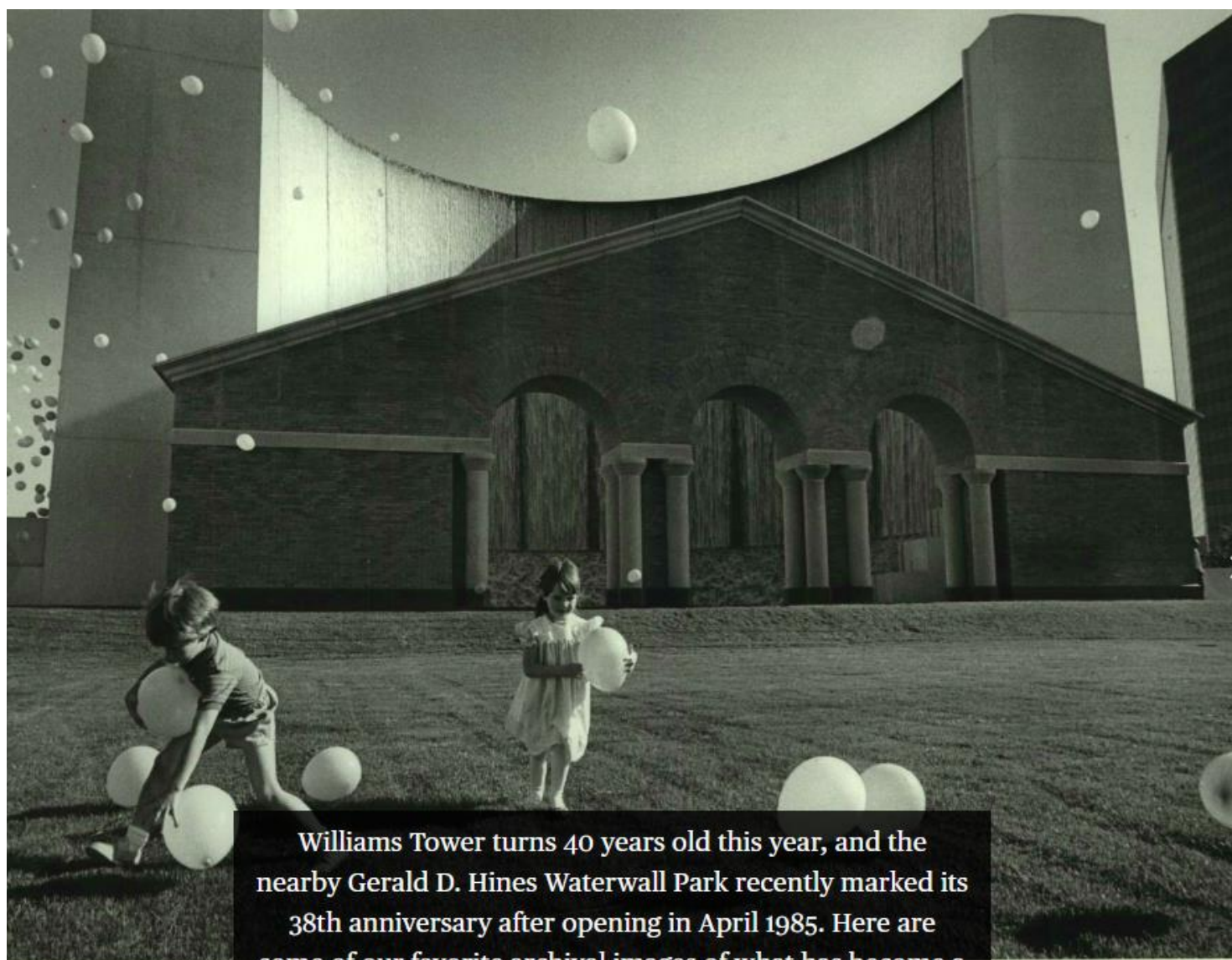
HOUSTON★CHRONICLE

VISUAL ESSAY

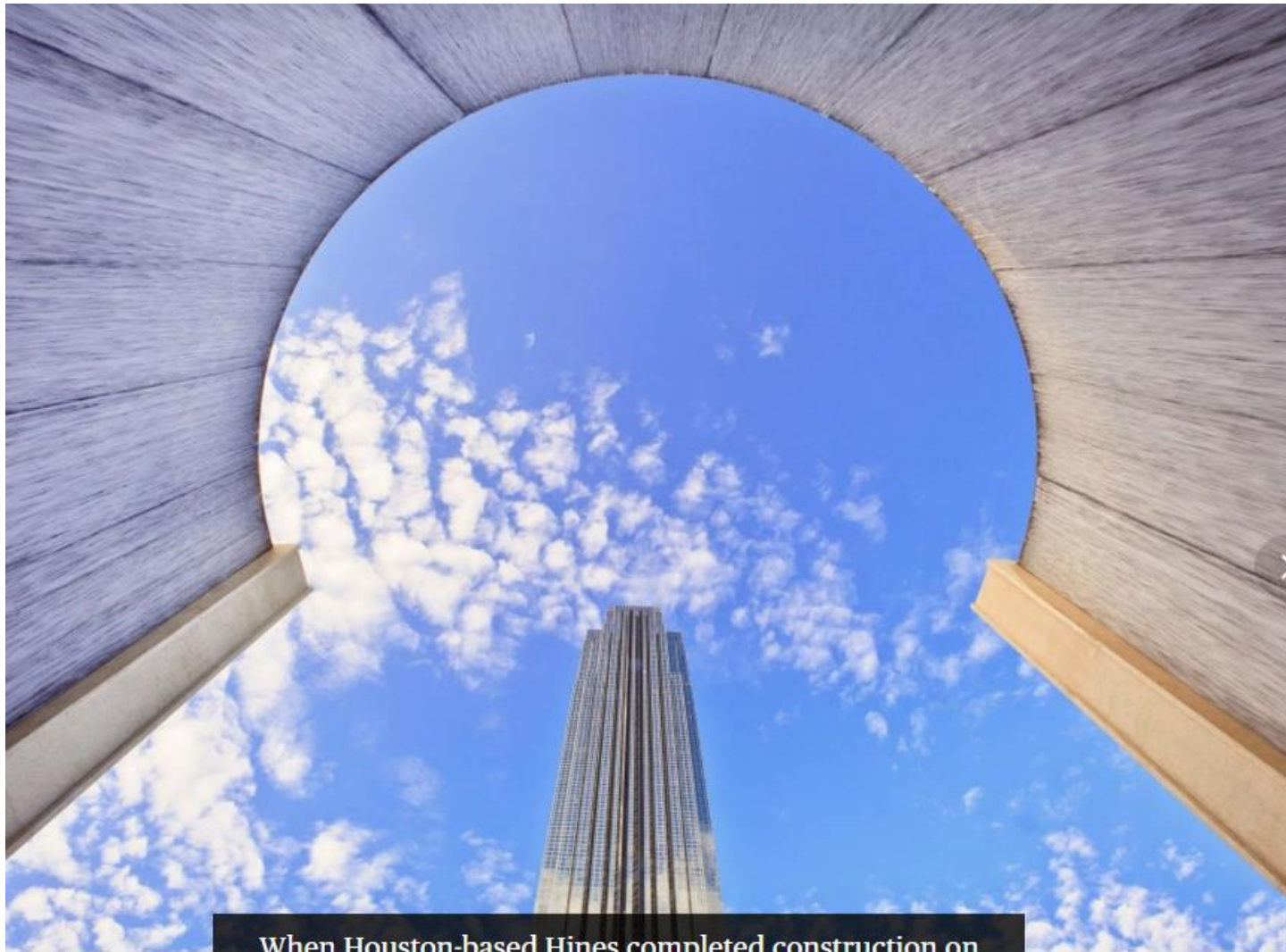
How Houston's Waterwall became a city landmark over nearly 40 years

BY MARISSA LUCK

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Williams Tower turns 40 years old this year, and the nearby Gerald D. Hines Waterwall Park recently marked its 38th anniversary after opening in April 1985. Here are some of our favorite archival images of what has become a Houston landmark. Pictured are children playing at the park's dedication ceremony when 5,000 pink and white balloons, along with 1,000 doves, were released with the push of a button by then Mayor Kathy Whitmire.



When Houston-based Hines completed construction on the 64-story Transco Tower in 1983, it was the tallest suburban office building in the U.S., according to the building's marketing materials. Construction of the nearby Waterwall started in 1983, too, but wouldn't be complete until 1985, according to Hines.

The Waterwall quickly became a place for photo shoots with dozens of commercial photography permits granted every year. Pictured is photoshoot by OM Magazine with Dayna Steele and Garth Hemp, of KLOL, and Bud Light mascot Spuds McKenzie in 1987.

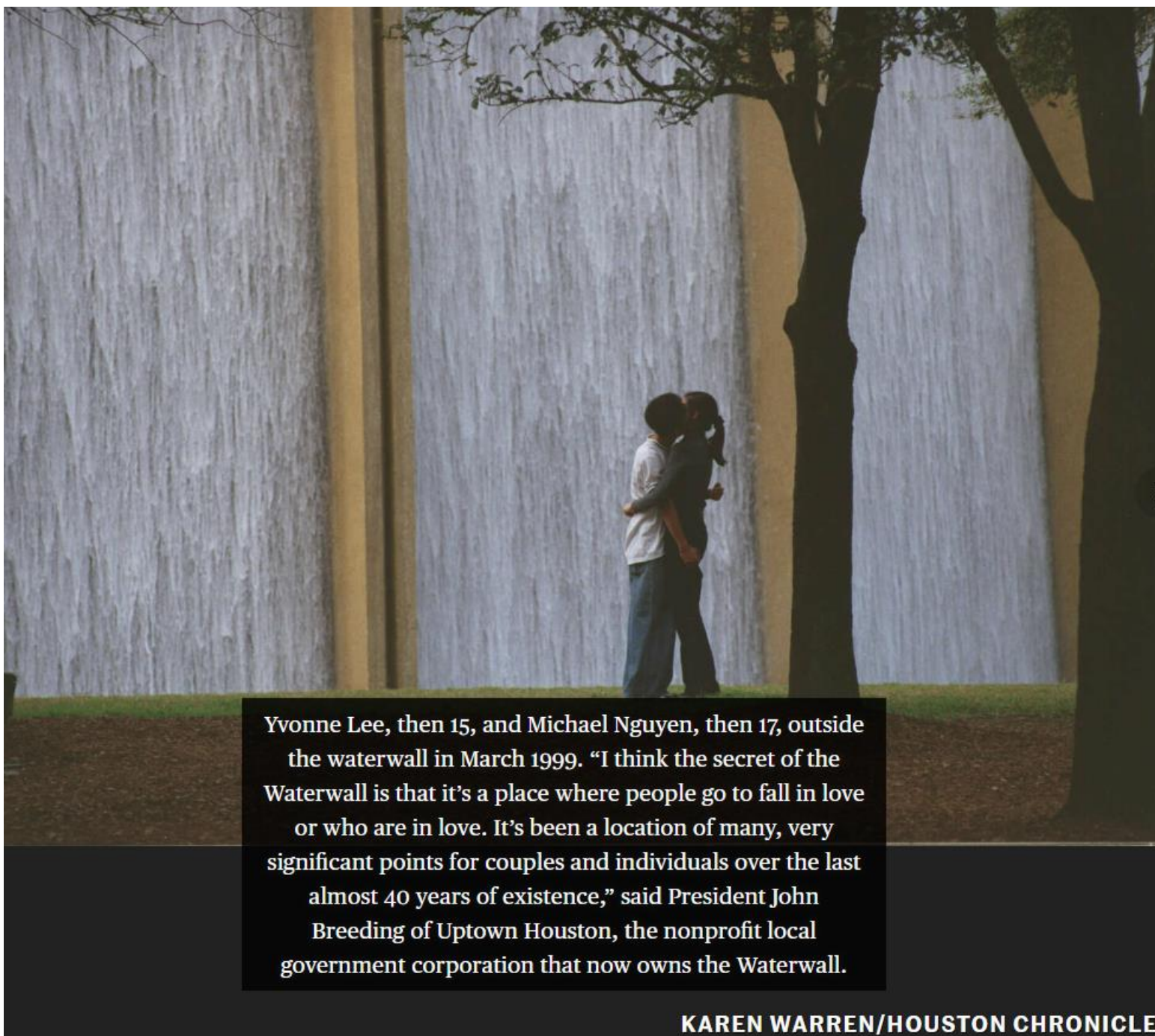


BETTY TICHICH/HOUSTON CHRONICLE



Sarah Mote, left, at the time a Spring Woods High School student, and her sister, Angie, then a student at Texas A&M enjoy the Waterwall circa December 1985. About 130,000 visitors pass through the 2.7-acre park every year to gaze at the 64-foot tall waterwall.

TIMOTHY BULLARD, HOUSTON CHRONICLE



Yvonne Lee, then 15, and Michael Nguyen, then 17, outside the waterwall in March 1999. “I think the secret of the Waterwall is that it’s a place where people go to fall in love or who are in love. It’s been a location of many, very significant points for couples and individuals over the last almost 40 years of existence,” said President John Breeding of Uptown Houston, the nonprofit local government corporation that now owns the Waterwall.

KAREN WARREN/HOUSTON CHRONICLE

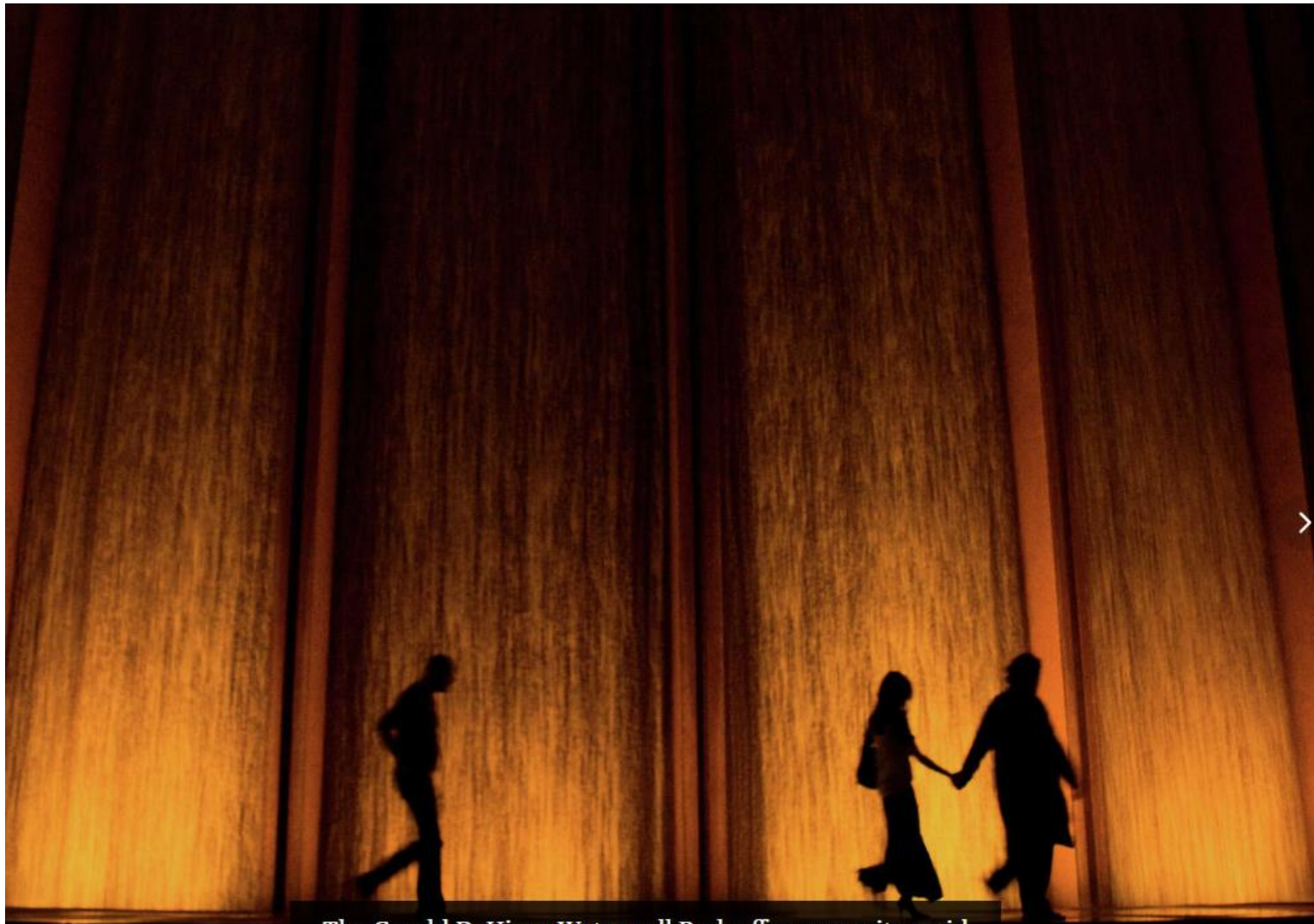
Frame by Frame
Experience Houston
through exceptional
photojournalism.



Gabrielle Schmees and Diego Grassano had their first dance as a married couple in front of the Waterwall after tying the knot amid coronavirus lockdowns in April 2020.

Dozens of weddings and proposals have taken place in front of the waterwall steps. Since January 2022 there have been at least 28 weddings, Hines says.

MARIE D. DE JESUS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

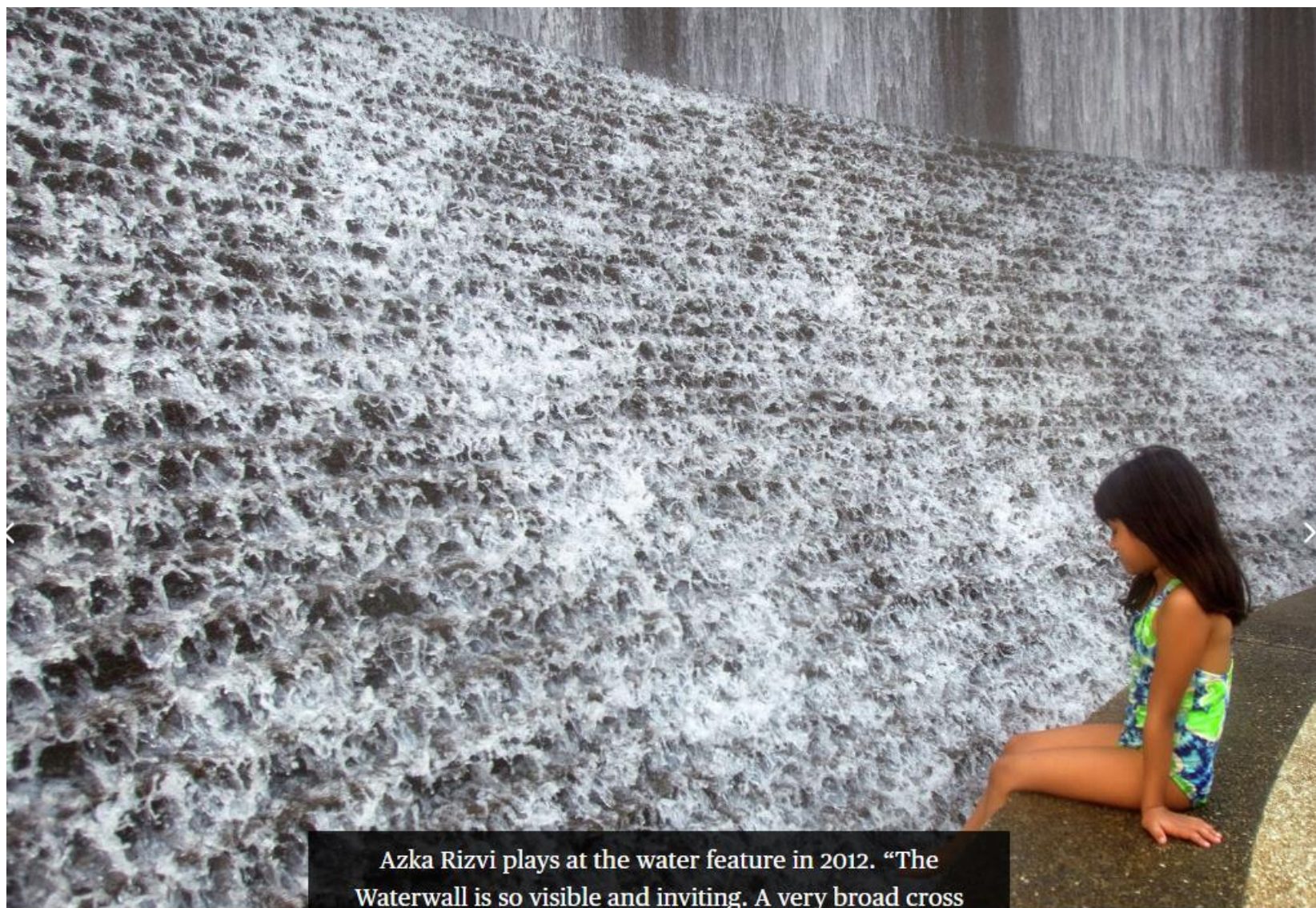


The Gerald D. Hines Waterwall Park offers a respite amid the bustle of the surrounding Uptown streets near Galleria mall and offices. Pictured is the Waterwall illuminated on a 2008 evening

SHARON STEINMANN/HOUSTON CHRONICLE

“Years ago, there was a survey ran by the Houston Post readers asking Houstonians what their favorite fountain in Houston was. The answer came back overwhelmingly: the Waterwall,” said John Breeding, president of Uptown Houston. Pictured are sisters Roxana and Gabriela Alaniz playing in 1992.





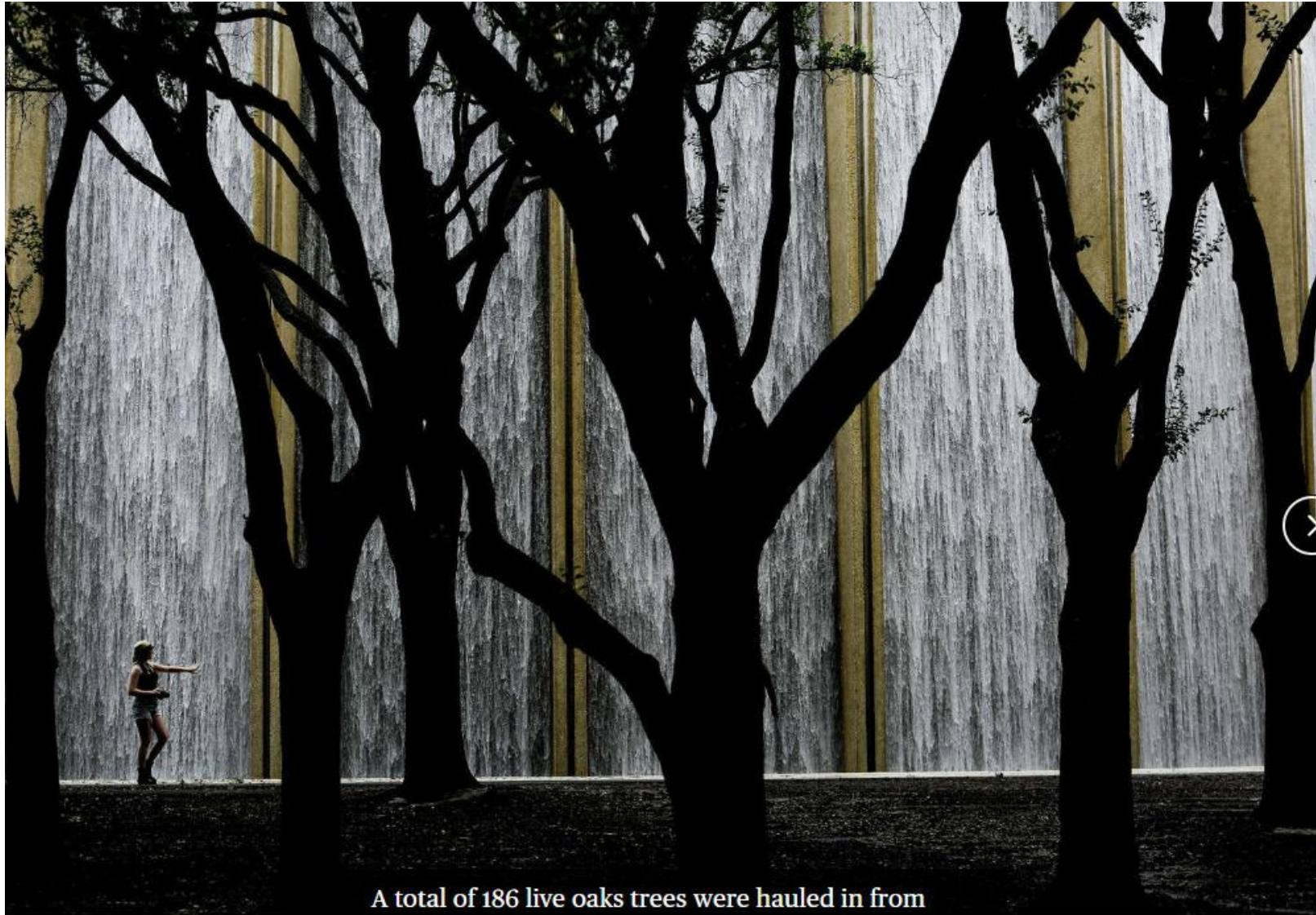
Azka Rizvi plays at the water feature in 2012. "The Waterwall is so visible and inviting. A very broad cross section of Houstonians come here and so it is, if you will, the people's fountain. It's a great legacy of the development here in Uptown," said Uptown Houston's John Breeding.

CODY DUTY / HOUSTON CHRONICLE)



The Waterwall has inserted itself into some memorable moments in Houston's history. In 2016, Omar Arvizu took a photo of his coworkers with TD, the official Houston Super Bowl Host Committee mascot, after the unveiling of the 1,600-pound sign for Super Bowl LI, held in February 2017.

KAREN WARREN/HOUSTON CHRONICLE



A total of 186 live oaks trees were hauled in from Jacksonville, Fla, to be installed along the edges of the park, according to Uptown Houston. The consistency and quantity of the trees needed were unlikely to be found in Texas, according to Uptown Houston.

MICHAEL CIAGLO/HOUSTON CHRONICLE



About 11,000 gallons of water cascade down the Waterwall every minute. The water is recycled every 3 1/2 hours.

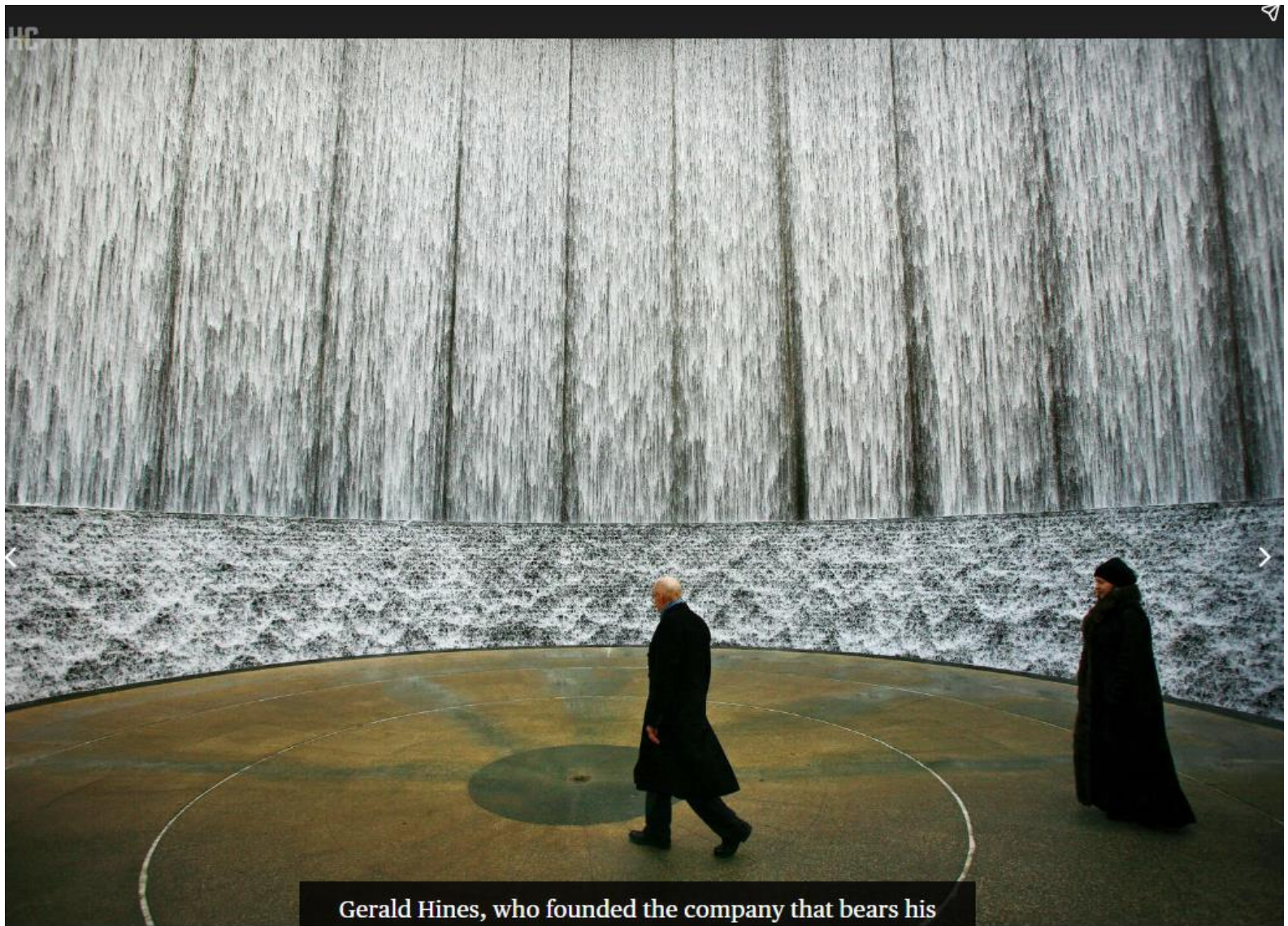
DIVERSEWORKS



Uptown Development Authority took over ownership of Gerald D. Waterwall Park in December 2009, but the commercial real estate firm Hines continues to maintain the park.



John Burgee Architects with Phillip Johnson and SWA Group designed the Waterwall and the surrounding park with a simple design. Pictured is the Waterwall under development in 1984.

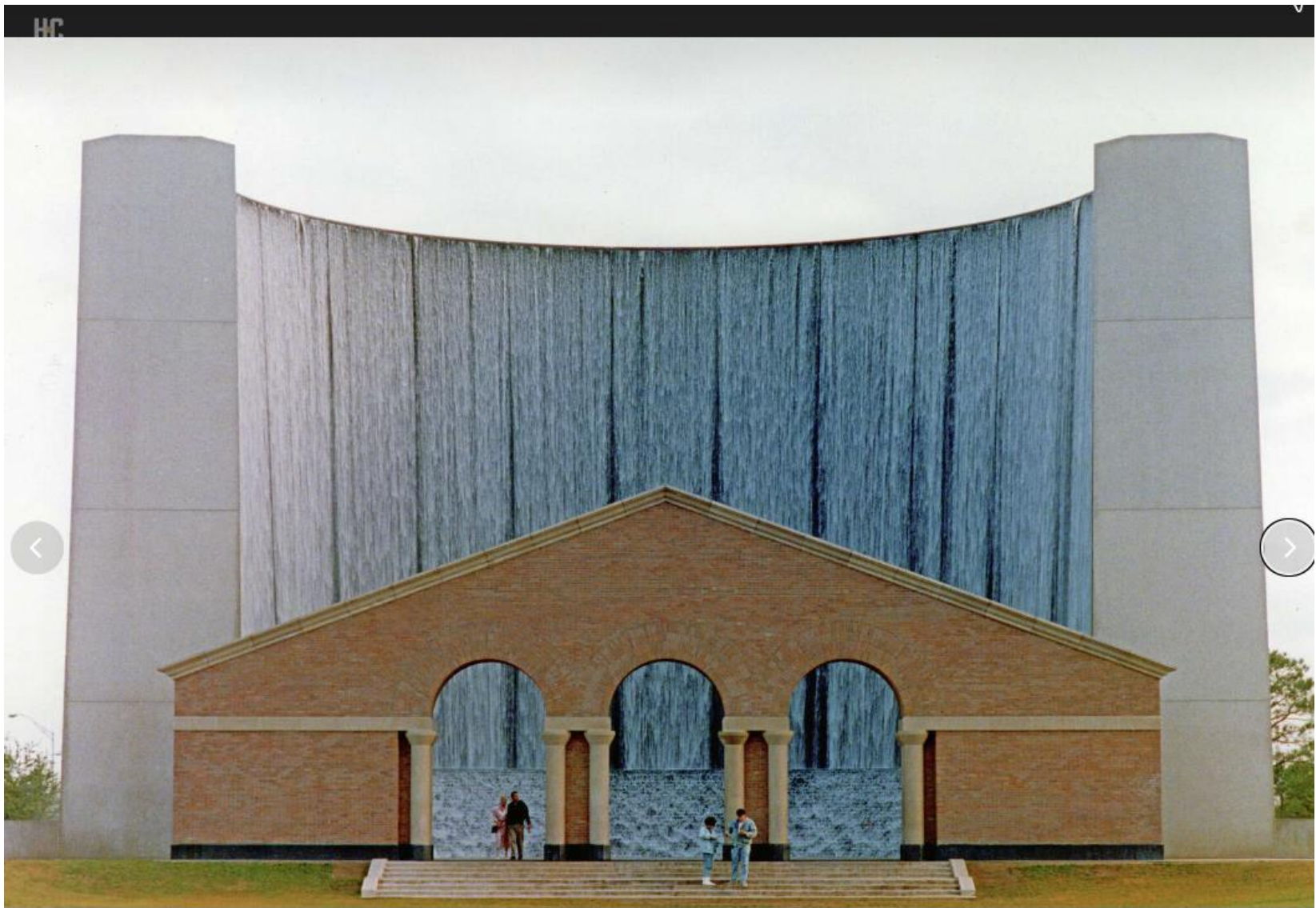


Gerald Hines, who founded the company that bears his names, walked with his wife, Barbara, after the ceremony in December 2009 when the Uptown Houston Board of Directors officially named it Gerald D. Hines Waterwall Park. Hines died in 2020.



The park previously was known as Transco Park. Kierra Boyce, then 4, keeps her face from getting wet while looking at the Waterwall with her uncle Dwayne Christophe in 2001.

DAVE ROSSMAN/SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE



Harvey-Monarch Engineers and Builders constructed the waterwall, shown here in 1988, three years after its opening.

BRUCE BENNETT/HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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< A December 1982 image showing construction of the 64-story Transco Tower (now Williams Tower) on Post Oak Boulevard.



E. JOE DEERING/HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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Transco Tower eventually was renamed Williams Tower. Its revolving beacon of light at its peak still serves as a marker in the Uptown-Galleria skyline today. In 2013, the building was sold to Invesco.

COURTESY HINES

