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Michigan Museums Association Announces Annual Awards Recipients

Grand Rapids, MI: Michigan museum professionals, volunteers, and supporters recently gathered in Grand Rapids, MI for the 2019 Annual Conference, a joint venture between the Michigan Museums Association (MMA) and Association of Midwest Museums, as well as the MMA Awards. The awards, presented annually by the association, acknowledge excellence in several areas. Four individuals or organizations in the Michigan museum community received awards. The recipients of this year's awards are:

- **MMA Volunteer of the Year** – Louise Stewart Beck, The Henry Ford
- **President's Award** – Dr. Bradley Taylor, University of Michigan Museum Studies Program
- **Peninsula's Prize** – Michigan State University Museum
- **Outreach Award** – Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus
- **Outreach Award Honorable Mention** – Grand Rapids Children's Museum

"It is such an honor to be able to recognize some of the good work and dedicated service in Michigan's museums. Michigan's museums provide jobs and support communities. They educate children and engage families and groups. They preserve and share priceless works of art and historic artifacts, and promote scientific exploration and a better understanding of our shared Michigan culture. The individuals honored by us this year represent the thousands of people in our state who are passionate about their work in museums, and are well deserved."- Lisa Craig Brisson, Executive Director, MMA

MMA Volunteer

The Volunteer of the Year award is given to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional innovation, dedication, and/or commitment to MMA within the past year. For 2019, **Louise Stewart Beck, The Henry Ford** was selected by MMA Executive Director Lisa Craig Brisson in recognition for her outstanding commitment and service to MMA.

Louise has been a member of MMA for several years, and became a volunteer in 2018. Since then, she has served on the Museums Advocacy Day and the conference planning teams. On the Museums Advocacy Day team, Louise has helped develop a process to be better prepared for meetings with legislators and their staff during our visit to Washington, D.C. each February. She also helped develop printed materials for the event, and has participated as well.

Louise has served on the revenue team for the MMA conference for the past two years, where she has helped develop better tracking for sponsorships, as well as helped recruit conference sponsors, advertisers and vendors, who provide an important level of financial support to the event each year.

“Louise is a delight to work with,” says MMA Executive Director Lisa Craig Brisson, who presented Beck with the award. “She is thoughtful and detail oriented, as well as dependable – all great qualities for anyone. But her passion for advocacy and the Michigan Museums Association makes her a true treasure”

President’s Award

The President’s Award is bestowed annually to one individual, company, or organization by the current MMA Board President. The award recognizes exemplary support of MMA, service to the Michigan museums field, a career of distinction or for any other criteria deemed appropriate by the MMA Board President. For 2019, MMA Board President Emily Fijol selected Dr. Bradley Taylor, Associate Director of the Museum Studies program at the University of Michigan in recognition of his commitment and service to the profession. The award was presented by Nathan Kemler.

Dr. Taylor has had such a positive impact on Michigan museums throughout several decades in the field. He is an extraordinary teacher, who helped shape the successful University of Michigan Graduate Certificate program and create the equally successful undergraduate minor at the University of Michigan. He is a scholar whose research has focused on such topics as authenticity and the limitations of digital surrogates, the history of Henry Ford’s British collecting, and the power of art in Detroit’s Heidelberg Project. He has become a go-to resource for many cultural institutions, as an advisor, board member, source of knowledge, and maker of connections.

Dr. Taylor is passionately committed to social justice and ethical behavior and to the potential of museums to challenge our preconceptions and address contemporary issues. He has been described as the breadth and energy of the U of M Museum Studies Program.

“Dr. Taylor has been an invaluable supporter of the Michigan Museums Association,” said Nathan Kemler, MMA Board President. “He is a builder of relations, a source of ideas and inspiration, and deeply dedicated to his students, colleagues, and Michigan’s museums.”

Peninsulas Prize

The Peninsulas Prize is given to an individual, museum, or a collection of partnering individuals or organizations that have done something particularly noteworthy in the past year. The award recognizes community engagement that highlights multiple perspectives, addresses community needs or concerns, and/or bridges the gap between the past and present. MMA awarded the 2019 Peninsulas Prizes to the **Michigan State University Museum**.

The Michigan State University Museum has long been valued for their work, but their partnership to create the exhibit, *Finding Our Voice: Sister Survivors Speak*, with the sister survivors of sexual abuse crimes at Michigan State University was a unique, challenging, and truly collaborative project

between a museum and community.

Moved by the stories of survivors, families, and allies, the Michigan State University Museum chose to react to the horrific sexual abuse committed by a university doctor by documenting, collecting, and creating programming that would honor survivors. In Fall 2018, MSU Museum staff members, understanding they were not the experts in this content, began a process of community co-curation to develop *Finding Our Voice: Sister Survivors Speak* with sister survivors and their allies.

Inspired by hundreds of teal bows and ribbons tied around campus trees in early 2018 as tributes to the survivors, the exhibit chronicles the continuing struggle by the survivors to call public attention to sexual violence and to promote dignity, healing, and positive transformation locally and globally. Visual art, poetry, and text celebrate the power of singular and collective voices to challenge injustice, demand institutional accountability, and build a better world. A living reminder to each and every survivor of sexual violence that you are not alone, this dynamic space invites interactive dialogue with all visitors, as we consider together strategies to promote institutional change and nurture cultures of safety, compassion, and healing.

Every aspect of the process - from title selection to developing the main message to creating a script to conserving the teal bows and ribbons - was done in a collaborative message working side by side with survivors and parents. Essential to the process was that survivor voices be heard. Challenges to the project included navigating exhibit content that addressed the institutional failures of Michigan State University and addressing the needs of all visitors, including K-12 school groups that would visit the exhibit. The process also has included navigating how to provide resources for visitors who might be triggered by visiting an exhibition addressing sexual assault.

“This innovative exhibition reflects on the vast crisis of sexual violence centered on the MSU campus in recent years and amplifies the voices of its survivors. This was a process in building trust, listening intently to those who experienced the trauma, and learning from each other to create a trauma-informed exhibit,” said Jason Dake, Vice President of the MMA Board of Directors.

The award was accepted by Dr. Mark Auslander, Director of the Michigan State University Museum and Associate Professor for the Department of History and Anthropology at MSU. With Auslander on the podium were Sister Survivors Amanda Smith (community co-curator) and Elena Cram, the textile artist who created the beautiful tapestry *Emergence* displayed in the exhibit.

Outreach Award

The Outreach Award is given to an organization that has developed a new or revamped museum educational program or project which is unique, innovative, and community-driven. Innovation may include incorporating a new technology, a method, or a practice that reflects a change from standard practice. The program can take place within the institution or out in the community.

The Grand Rapids Children’s Museum received an Honorable Mention for their pilot program called STEAM for Success, a traveling STEAM exploration program. Staff from the museum worked with youth at high risk of delinquency with a goal to spark a love of science through an open-ended, playful approach, as well as to introduce new skills through experimentation. STEAM for Success

helped to increase awareness, interest and confidence in science, technology, engineering, arts and math for 106 children over a period of four months.

Winning the Outreach Programming award was the Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus (HMC) for their Education Outreach Program. The Education Outreach Program began in 2018 to support Michigan teachers with meeting the Michigan PA 170 mandate for Holocaust and genocide instruction. The HMC travels throughout Michigan providing free curriculum workshops, instructional resources and support to teachers and school/district administrators. The workshops use Echoes and Reflections as the gold standard of Holocaust instruction, which was developed by the Anti-Defamation League, Yad Vashem and the USC Shoah Foundation, the three leading organizations for Holocaust instruction. The workshops also use IWitness developed by the USC Shoah Foundation and Portraits of Honor, which is a resource about Holocaust survivors who live in Michigan. In addition, a significant component of the Education Outreach Program is connecting the workshop to the museum experience and assisting schools with financial support to visit the museum. The HMC conducted 40 workshops with 596 teachers participating from 67 out of 83 counties and 318 schools in Michigan (at the time of nomination) with another with 20 additional workshops scheduled for the remainder of 2019 and with a projected 300 more teachers attending. In addition to broad impact, the program has achieved high success ratings. The annual Echoes and Reflections Monitoring and Evaluation report for 2018 shows that the HMC Education Outreach Program is outperformed the national average for Echoes and Reflections workshops. The HMC Education Outreach Program has a 96% excellent rating versus a 93% national excellence rating. The program significantly is above the national average in the area of “relevance of the program to my teaching needs.”

“It was truly a difficult task to select one outreach program and all were highly rated by the selection committee, but this nomination stood out for several reasons,” said Ashley Ross, Chair of the Awards Committee for the MMA Annual Conference. “The content is so important, the program’s reach is so broad, and the evaluations are incredibly positive.”

The award was accepted by Timothy Constant, Manager of Education Outreach at HMC. Ashley Ross, Chair of the Awards Committee for the MMA Annual Conference, presented the award.

For higher resolution images and identifications, please visit: <http://www.michiganmuseums.org/2019-Awards-Photos/>.

The Michigan Museums Association is a catalyst for advancing Michigan’s museum community through shared learning, advocacy and collaboration. MMA has been supporting the work of Michigan museums for over 60 years. Our members include the institutions, professionals and volunteers of the Michigan museum community who believe that strong museums help us better understand ourselves and our world. Every type of museum is represented and welcomed, including art, history, science, military and maritime, and youth museums, as well as aquariums, zoos, botanical gardens, arboretums, historic sites, and science and technology centers.