



EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### **East Tennessee Historical Society Honors Twelve Knoxville Initiatives With History Awards of Excellence**

KNOXVILLE, Tenn., May 13, 2016 – The East Tennessee Historical Society's (ETHS) annual Awards of Excellence were presented at the organization's Annual Meeting on May 3, 2016 at the Foundry on the World's Fair Site in Knoxville. Since 1982, the Society has been annually recognizing individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the preservation, promotion, programming and interpretation of the region's history. Thirteen Knoxville initiatives and their leaders were among the 31 awards presented.

- **Dr. John R. Finger**, Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, received the ***Ramsey Award for Professional Achievement*** for his longtime support of local history through teaching at the University of Tennessee for 32 years, where he worked towards promoting, preserving, and educating the public on the region's history, with particular attention to Cherokee history. As a teacher, advisor, mentor, and administrator, he influenced thousands of undergraduate and graduate students. His nationally recognized research includes the 2011 book *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*, two books on the Eastern Band of Cherokees, and countless articles and presentations.
- **Belle Morris Elementary School** received the ***Teaching Excellence Award*** for the school's centennial project. Faculty, volunteers, and students spent several years researching and collecting artifacts, documents, and photos to prepare for the school's centennial in 2015. Highlights included video restorations, a student-developed wall chronology of significant events, and a grand celebration that included the entire student body, faculty, dignitaries, officials, and alumni.
- **Johnson Architecture, Inc.** received the ***Preservation Award*** for their work on Anderson Hall at Maryville College. Built in 1870, Anderson Hall is an iconic anchor of Maryville College. In need of restoration, Johnson Architecture worked to maintain the integrity of the building while upgrading it to fit the needs of a present-day college campus, carefully protecting staircases, varied window styles, high ceilings, and the historical bell tower.

- **Knox County Museum of Education** and their Director **Benna van Vuuren** both received a ***Community History Award*** for their work in preserving and promoting Knox County Schools. The Knox County Museum of Education collects materials and artifacts from Knox County schools and catalogs, preserves, showcases, and makes them accessible to the public. Volunteer led, the museum welcomes both researchers and those seeking a trip down memory lane. A retired educator, Benna van Vuuren has worked tirelessly to collect and preserve the history of Knox County Schools for today and future generations and was the guiding force behind the establishment of the Knox County Museum of Education.
  
- **Norman C. Shaw** received the ***Community History Award*** for promoting the region's Civil War history. He was a founder of the Knoxville Civil War Roundtable (1983), and in 1987 founded the Association of *Sultana* Descendants and Friends to preserve the memory of the hundreds of Union prisoners of war who perished in the 1865 steamboat disaster. The 2016 Annual *Sultana* Reunion commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unveiling of the *Sultana* Monument at Mount Olive Cemetery.
  
- **Tennesseans for Living History** received the ***Community History Award*** for public education and interpretation of Tennessee's history. Tennesseans for Living History is committed to raising public awareness of the importance of Tennessee's role in the formation of the United States through interpretive programs and living history reenactments. The group contributes time and expertise to educational programs across the region, presenting 140 programs in the past two years.
  
- **Girl Scout Museum at Daisy's Place Volunteers** received the ***Award of Distinction*** for their work with the museum. The museum and library that began 20 years ago as a collection of photographs, histories, and items from private collections has now grown into a program center for girls and a regional archive for Girl Scout history. A dedicated corps of volunteers has been and remains key to the success of this important resource.
  
- **Lucinda Heatherly Detached Tent No. 3, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War** received the ***Award of Distinction*** for the Ancestor Information Project. The project has gathered genealogical data and family stories related to Civil War ancestors of its members, which have been donated to the McClung Historical Collection of the Knox County Public Library, where they are available to the public.
  
- **Major William A. McTeer Camp No. 39, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War** and their Commander **David H. McReynolds** both received an ***Award of Distinction*** for preservation and promotion of the region's Civil War history. Founded in 2009, this very active camp preserves and shares the region's Civil War history through public events, as well as camp activities. The camp is an important community resource for reenactments, fairs, grave markings, memorial ceremonies, event organizing, and displays excellence in publications and their website. With a lifetime of interest in history, David McReynolds focuses his time on the region's Civil War history, especially through work with the Major William A. McTeer Camp No. 39,

Sons of Union Veterans, where he has served as commander, webmaster, and newsletter editor, and participates in public events. He was recognized by the Tennessee General Assembly with a Tennessee Colonel Award.

- **Nolpix Media, LLC/Cumberland Mountain State Park/Tennessee State Parks Interpretive Programming & Education** received the *Award of Distinction* for their documentary *Cumberland Mountain State Park: A Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy*. The short documentary debuted in July 2015 for the park's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The film uses vintage footage, dramatic aerial photography, and CCC reenactors to educate the museum's thousands of visitors about the Great Depression and the park's development.
- **Tennessee Association of Vintage Baseball** received the *Award of Distinction* for promotion and public education of baseball in the region in the 1860s. Since its start with two teams in 2013, the TAOVBB now consists of ten teams whose educational mission is to play base ball by 1860s rules – no spittin', no swearin', and no gloves. All four East Tennessee clubs carry the names of original teams – Lightfoot and Mountain City in Chattanooga and in Knoxville, the Holstons and the Emmett Machinists. Partnerships, diverse venues, and the sport's novelty are drawing a large attendance.

**About the East Tennessee Historical Society:**

Established in 1834, the East Tennessee Historical Society has 2,000 members across the United States. Its active publications program includes the biannual genealogy magazine *Tennessee Ancestors*; the annual *Journal of East Tennessee History*; and *Newsline*, as well as other books pertaining to the region's history. The Society also sponsors the Museum of East Tennessee History, East Tennessee National History Day, and the family heritage programs "First Families of Tennessee" and "Civil War Families of Tennessee."

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