



Saturday, April 18, 2015
8:00 am – 10:00 am
Sheraton Nashville Downtown
Nashville, Tennessee

2015 NCPH Awards

NCPH Founders Award

The NCPH Council of Past Presidents has developed the Founders Award to recognize those individuals who were present at the creation of NCPH and who played critical roles in the organization's success. The first recipients of this award are G. Wesley Johnson and Robert W. Pomeroy, III.

G. Wesley Johnson

How do we encapsulate Wes Johnson's myriad contributions to NCPH? The past chairs and presidents agreed that Wes was probably THE most critical person in getting NCPH started. They described Wes as "One of a kind. . . . the historical incarnation of the Music Man," an "enthusiastic learner," "the missionary," and the "Johnny Appleseed of public history." Everyone has a story of how they met Wes: on a visit to Loyola University of Chicago to promote a public history program; in Washington, D.C., at a NEH project directors' meeting or a conference to talk about the problem of jobs in the humanities; at UC Santa Barbara; or at the formative Montecito meeting in 1979 and subsequent NCPH conferences. Wes's great contributions to NCPH were four-fold – and all while we still communicated by letters and phone calls:

- 1) Long before Nike made "just do it" a slogan, Wes put it into practice. Should there be an organization for public history? He made it happen, calling the first meetings, serving initially as acting chair and then as the first chair from 1979 to 1983. How do we spread best practices for teaching public history? Let's have a special newsletter.
- 2) He brought together people who shared his enthusiasm and willingness to take a leap into the unknown. He had the vision, energy, and marketing savvy to make public history a national movement as he used NEH, Rockefeller Foundation, and other funding to get NCPH organized and to host conferences where young leaders of nascent programs first met.
- 3) He helped found and build *The Public Historian*, serving as the editor until 1987, a formidable task, well accomplished; NCPH continues to recognize his accomplishment through the G. Wesley Johnson Award. Using Rockefeller Foundation funding to start the journal, *The Public Historian* gave us intellectual respectability *vis à vis* historians in academic programs
- 4) An Africanist by training, Wes, along with Bob Kelley, established one of the earliest public history programs at UC Santa Barbara that served as a model for other programs and that turned out many future NCPH leaders. Wes was persistent in his belief that we were creating a new field of academic study, although at the time no one really knew much about how graduate students should be trained for public historical practice.

Robert W. Pomeroy, III

Bob Pomeroy, a Stanford history graduate, worked in international economic development. An early

supporter of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, he was the point person for the NCC Business Resource Group. Convinced of history's value to the business world, he put his international business background to work for history and, for many of us, personified what you could do with a history degree in the business world.

He then attended the Montecito conference in April 1979 and worked with Phil Cantelon after the September 1979 meeting in Washington, D.C., to develop a structure for what would become NCPH. We can credit Bob for the fact that, at the 1980 Pittsburgh meeting, the steering committee adopted a council model instead of an ordinary membership organization.

An early member of the board of directors, he served as secretary, treasurer, and on *The Public Historian's* editorial board. He was our registered agent when we incorporated and made sure we had the right IRS status and bank accounts. His gentlemanly manner helped keep us focused.

Bob and David Trask co-edited NCPH's first major publication: the 481-page *The Craft of Public History: An Annotated Select Bibliography*, with eleven chapters composed of 1,700 citations from 94 historians that we published through Greenwood Press in 1983. Before the Internet and JSTOR, their work was a huge asset – one never again repeated!

One of Bob's major contributions was his series of charts and pamphlets covering history's broader shores. He organized the National Center for the Study of History with Phil Cantelon and developed the first chart, "Careers for Graduates in History," in 1984, with input from NCPH. NCPH also distributed his chart on careers for historians in business. These evolved and were used extensively in courses, and he eventually established Serenus Press to continue these publications.

Bob also helped to shape NCPH's ethos. Many of us recognize Bob as a positive force in shaping our careers, especially when we started businesses. You did not want to disappoint him. Failure was okay, but not inaction. He also sought out students at meetings, listened to them, and sent supportive follow-up notes. There is a general consensus that he should go down in our annals as "the nicest person in public history."

Robert Kelley Memorial Award

This award perpetuates the legacy and memory of a founder of the modern public history movement, Dr. Robert Kelley. It honors distinguished and outstanding achievements by individuals, institutions, nonprofit or corporate entities for having made significant inroads in making history relevant to individual lives of ordinary people outside of academia. Award committee members: Don Stevens (chair), Lindsey Reed, Emily Greenwald

Janelle Warren-Findley

The recipient of this year's Robert Kelley Memorial Award, the late Dr. Janelle Warren-Findley, exemplified the legacy of Dr. Robert Kelley—outstanding achievement in making history relevant to individuals outside of academia. (Jann Warren-Findley received notice of the award the week before she died in Phoenix at age 69.) As the nominees wrote, "Whether as a teacher and mentor, an advocate for internationalization, a scholar and practitioner, or a leader in the field, Warren-Findley has pushed us to explore new depths and reach more broadly, inspiring not just her students but the larger field of public history." For more than 20 years, she had been an Associate Professor in History at Arizona State University, where she served as co-director and then director of the Public History Program and directed

40 MA theses and 15 dissertations. A major characteristic of Jann's mentoring was the way she nurtured students to become professionals who do not just learn theory, but also engage in the practice of public history beyond the campus. Since the beginning of her career in the early 1970s, Jann taught, practiced, and promoted public history on an international stage across four continents. This included six years of service on the board of the U.S. committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites and, in 2011, she was a founding member of the International Federation for Public History—an arm of the General Federation of Historical Sciences in Paris. Her stature as an international leader in public history extended to decades of dedication and participation in the National Council on Public History, where she served as President-Elect and President, spent six years as the Chairman of the Board of *The Public Historian*, and introduced scores of students to the organization. The NCPH is honored to recognize Dr. Jann Warren-Findley with the 2015 Robert Kelley Memorial Award.

Outstanding Public History Project Award

This award is presented for work completed within the previous two calendar years that contributes to a broader public reflection and appreciation of the past or that serves as a model of professional public history practice. NCPH acknowledges the generous support of Stevie and Ted Wolf that makes this award possible. Award committee members: Suzanne Fischer (Chair), S. Paul Zielinski, Robert Townsend, and Rebekah Dobrasko

Award Winner

"Histories of the National Mall," Sheila Brennan and Sharon Leon, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University

This year's winner of the Outstanding Public History Project Award is the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media for *Histories of the National Mall*. Neatly framed by the national museums and government buildings that surround it, the National Mall has its own fascinating history, made easily accessible through this exemplary place-based public history mobile website. A clean, efficient design makes navigating the site intuitive and easy. Stories, grouped in themes, eras, and locations, are insightful and surprising. The design choices, research, and execution created a project to which other practitioners can look for inspiration and guidance. The decision to create a mobile website rather than a mobile app allows the site to reach the largest percentage of the approximately 25 million annual Mall visitors. Though primarily designed for use by Mall tourists during their visit, the site stands as an excellent destination for anyone interested in our nation's Front Yard and as an outstanding example of how public historians can harness mobile technology to forge place-based historical connections.

Honorable Mention

"Slaves and Slaveholders of Wessyngton Plantation," Rob DeHart, Paulette Fox, and Mark Hooper, Tennessee State Museum

NCPH Book Award

The NCPH Book Award recognizes outstanding scholarship that addresses the theory and/or practice of public history or that includes the products of public history work. Award committee members: Michael Gorn (chair), Pam Sanfillipo, and Rebecca Shrum

Award Winner

From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement

(University of Massachusetts Press, 2013)

Andrea A. Burns, Appalachian State University

The 2015 National Council on Public History book award is presented to Andrea A. Burns for her imaginative work, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement*. This book chronicles four local museums established to redress imbalances, as well as to counteract outright neglect, by mainline museums in their treatment of the stories and contributions of African Americans. Faced with distortions or exclusion from history, a group of black leaders—especially those active in the black power movement of the 1960s—began to organize, raise funds, and collect artifacts in an effort to preserve and present the history of their own communities. Burns presents these case studies, ultimately showing how the techniques employed by them and others transformed the narratives of bigger U.S. history museums, culminating finally in the creation of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Burns presents her narrative with grace and clarity, abetted by a wide and judicious use of sources. Her book adds a new and welcome source to the literature of public history, and should also attract national attention at a time of debate, when minority communities continue to redress issues of powerlessness and marginalization.

Honorable Mention

Alice Morse Earle and the Domestic History of Early America

(The University of Massachusetts Press, 2013)

Susan Reynolds Williams, Fitchburg State College

Michael C. Robinson Prize for Historical Analysis

Offered in alternating years, this prize recognizes historical studies that contribute directly to the formation of public policy. Dr. Robinson was a pioneering public works historian who tirelessly promoted historical research as a component of policy formation. He was associate editor of the American Public Works Association's bicentennial History of Public Works in the United States, and served as research coordinator for the Public Works Historical Society and as the first historian of the Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Commission/Lower Mississippi Valley Division. Award committee members: Roger Launius (chair), David Strohmaier, and Meghan O'Connor

Award Winner

Other than War: The American Military Experience and Operations in the Post-Cold War Decades

Frank N. Schubert

The committee awards the Michael C. Robinson Prize to Frank N. Schubert for his monograph, *Other than War: The American Military Experience and Operations in the Post-Cold War Decades*. Schubert did an excellent job of analyzing policing efforts by the military and showing their evolution in the recent past. It is a policy analysis that is both historically sound and enlightening. The committee acknowledges this study's relevance for government administrators and policy makers, its primary audience, as well as the general public.

Honorable Mention

First in Class Acquisition Challenges

Justin L. C. Eldridge, Naval History and Heritage Command

G. Wesley Johnson Award

Named in honor of the founding editor of *The Public Historian*, this award recognizes the most outstanding article appearing in the journal during the previous volume year. NCPH acknowledges the generous support of Stan Hordes of HMS Associates in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and many of his friends for underwriting this award. Award committee members: Ed Roach (chair), Beth Boland, Donna DeBlasio, and Julie Davis

Award Winner

"In the Shadow of the Butcher: The Limits to Confronting Colonial Legacies Through Commemoration in South Africa," *The Public Historian* Vol 36, No 2.

Julia C. Wells

In her article about the successes, failures, and lessons learned in commemorating the bicentennial of Grahamstown, South Africa, Julia Wells excels in discussing the complexities of commemorating the establishment of a community founded amid racial violence and discrimination in a context that is still affected by racial division and high unemployment. Her examination of the year-long commemoration of Grahamstown's 1812 establishment is a useful source in planning any project in which, according to one judge, a "painful past, diverse partners and audiences, multiple viewpoints, contested interpretations, and unanticipated expectations play a role."

Honorable Mention

"Reflections on the Public Interpretation of Regional Environmental History in Western Pennsylvania," *The Public Historian* Vol 36, No 3.

Chris J. Magoc

Graduate Student Project Award

This award is given to an outstanding public history student project initiated as academic coursework and implemented and recognized beyond the classroom for its contribution to the field of public history. Award committee members: Erik Nystrom (chair), Ella Howard, Martha Tye, and Erin McLeary

Award Winner

"The Lost Museum," Lily Benedict, Elizabeth Crawford, Kathrinne Duffy, Sophia LaCava-Bohanan, Jessica Palinski, Rebecca Soules, and Jamie Topper, Brown University; Raina Belleau, Layla Eshan, and Kristen Orr, Rhode Island School of Design

The NCPH Student Project Award goes to the Jenks Society for Lost Museums, for their "Lost Museum" exhibition and project. Their collaborative historical and artistic re-imagination of the zoological museum created at Brown by curator J.W.P. Jenks engages with the history of the natural sciences, the university, and museums in a playful and thought-provoking fashion. The team demonstrated dedication, ability, and a willingness to collaborate with other disciplines to bring the story of John Jenks to their immediate and larger community. Their hard work yielded an exceptionally professional presentation, and their efforts received extensive media coverage and have drawn in many visitors from beyond campus and online.

Honorable Mention

"Push and Pull: Eastern European and Russian Migration to the Cape Fear Region," Beth Bullock, Jayd Buteaux, and Leslie Randle-Morton, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

New Professional Travel Awards

New Professional travel awards are for individuals who are new to the field and practice of public history. These two grants assist new professionals in attending the conference, helping them become more connected with other members of the profession early in their careers. NCPH acknowledges the generous support of Historical Research Associates, Inc., for underwriting one of these awards. Award committee members: Amy Williams (chair), Tim Roberts, Joel Ralph, and Kristin Ahlberg

The 2015 New Professional Award committee was challenged to pick two winning professionals from a group of strong applications. What a delightful embarrassment of riches we hope to see continue into future years. This year's candidates truly represented the idea of the new professional. It is reaffirming and rejuvenating to feel the enthusiasm these applicants have for public history.

HRA New Professional Travel Award

Rebecca Onion, Slate.com

While rapidly building an impressive academic resume through her scholarly writing and presentations, Ms. Onion is spreading her enthusiasm for public history on a much broader, popular scale through her daily history blog on Slate, *The Vault*, and other nationally-prominent outlets. Her exploration of Internet history, while still early in its evolution, is thought-provoking and worthy of further dialog amongst all public historians. Ms. Onion is giving back to her chosen profession through service on professional committees and teaching, among other avenues. She exemplifies the new professional.

NCPH New Professional Travel Award

Abby Curtin, Cleveland Restoration Society

Ms. Curtin's application made clear her interest and commitment to public history. She is bringing her public history perspective to the field of historic preservation, learning that, while very similar, the two disciplines remain distinct. Ms. Curtin has articulated her desire to use her public history skills within the historic preservation context to the benefit of both fields. She is professionally engaged through volunteer committee work, published works, and presentations. Ms. Curtin's enthusiasm to leverage her professional engagement both for her own professional development but also to the benefit of her current organization is admirable. She has placed herself on the path to meet her strong professional goals.

Graduate Student Travel Awards

The Graduate Student Travel Award provides assistance for conference travel costs for five graduate students who will present a session or poster or will participate in a working group at the annual meeting. Award committee members: Erik Nystrom (chair), Ella Howard, Martha Tye, and Erin McLeary

Congratulations this year go to the following:

Erin Bernard – Temple University

Ashley Rose Creegan – West Virginia University

Emily Pipes – University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Nicolette Rohr – University of California, Riverside

Jennifer Whitmer Taylor – University of South Carolina

Congratulations to the 2015 award recipients, and thank you award selection committees!

Submissions for the 2016 NCPH Book Award are due November 1, 2015, and all other award submissions are due December 1, 2015. Please see www.ncph.org for details.