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06/22/2023

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HHM Shenandoah Project Wins Prestigious 2023 AASLH Award of Excellence

Nashville, TN – The American Association for State and Local

History (AASLH) congratulates the Harbor History Museum for receiving an Award of Excellence for the HHM Shenandoah Restoration Project. The Award of Excellence is part of the AASLH Leadership in History Awards, the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation of state and local history.

The HHM Shenandoah Project was initiated almost 20 years ago when the 65-foot wooden fishing boat was hauled out of the water and into dry dock as part of the Harbor History Museum’s new museum vision. After 73 years on the water, she’d been donated by the Janovich Family with the intention of her being a “museum boat.” Her Gig Harbor pedigree—she was built at Skansie Shipyard and fished by two Gig Harbor families—sealed the deal. This award recognizes the remarkable work done in the last ten years since the boat was moved to the museum site. Shipwright Riley Hall and his incredible team of volunteers have meticulously conserved and, where needed, restored, frames, beams, knees, and decks to stabilize the vessel and breathe new life into a boat once riddled with rot and fungus.

“Their remarkable skill, vision and talent has not only made it possible for visitors to safely walk on deck,” says HHM Director Stephanie Lile. “It has made the boat a work of art—a collage of old and new, salvaged and newly crafted.”



This year, AASLH is proud to confer fifty-one national awards honoring people, projects, and exhibits. The winners represent the best in the field and provide leadership for the future of state and local history.

The HHM Shenandoah Project, also known as Project 224606 after the vessel's registration number, is funded by the Washington State Heritage Capital Projects Fund, the Pierce County Historic Preservation fund, and was Washington State's honoree for a Save America's Treasures grant through the National Park Service.

"So much has been accomplished on the project in the last five years," says Lile. "We look forward to sharing this beautiful boat and her new gallery in 2025 when the capital project to enclose the gallery where Shenandoah is housed and create new engaging exhibits is complete."

The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards not only honor significant achievement in the field of state and local history, but also bring public recognition of the opportunities for small and large organizations, institutions, and programs to make contributions in this arena. For more information about the Leadership in History Awards, contact AASLH at 615-320-3203, or go to www.aaslh.org.

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Harbor History Museum

The Harbor History Museum creates opportunities to experience the heritage of the greater Gig Harbor communities by collecting, preserving, and sharing the rich history of the area. Founded in 1964, the Gig Harbor Peninsula Historical Society, dba Harbor History Museum, opened its new facility in 2010. The museum campus includes an 1893 fully restored one-room schoolhouse; a 65-foot fishing vessel currently being meticulously conserved; 7,000 square feet of exhibition space; and a 900-square foot library, research, and meeting room. www.harborhistorymuseum.org

About AASLH

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), a national nonprofit association, provides leadership and resources to help the history community thrive and make the past more meaningful for all people. AASLH serves the tens of thousands of history organizations, professionals, and volunteers around the country who help people of all ages develop critical thinking skills and understand how learning history helps society make progress toward justice. Through research, advocacy, and our field-leading professional development program, AASLH advances public history practice and connects history practitioners to critical issues in the field and to one another. For more information about AASLH visit www.aaslh.org.