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## **Michigan Architectural Foundation Awards its 2020 Evans Graham Preservation Award Grant to Ypsilanti's Starkweather Memorial Chapel**

*\$10,000 grant will help restore and transform 1888 former funeral venue into a festive community and cultural asset*

DETROIT, April 29, 2020 – The Michigan Architectural Foundation (MAF) has announced that Starkweather Memorial Chapel, located at Ypsilanti's historic Highland Cemetery, is the 2020 recipient of MAF's Evans Graham Preservation Award grant. The \$10,000 grant will help support the restoration and adaptive reuse of the 1888 funeral chapel for use as a venue for lectures, weddings, receptions, and private and community events. The announcement was made by MAF's Evans Graham Preservation Award jury.

Created in 1998 to honor the memory of preservation architect David Evans, FAIA, the award provides financial assistance and recognition to groups or individuals seeking to preserve historic Michigan architecture. Ralph and Jeanne Graham, co-founders of the award, guided its development until their passing; the award was re-named in 2015 to honor their leadership and contribution. The award is granted annually by a jury based on the merits of the project.

"The jury was impressed with the project's creativity as well as its commitment to preservation excellence," said Park Smith, AIA, MAF Evans Graham Award jury chair. "Additionally, the project's volunteer team is one of the most impressive and qualified we have seen in the award's 22 years. MAF is pleased to help support their efforts." The jury also cited the project's creative adaptive reuse, combined with its technically excellent restoration of the building and its stained glass, as a model preservation effort for communities across Michigan.

The sandstone, copper and brick Richardsonian Romanesque-style chapel, designed by renowned architects Mason & Rice, was built as a memorial to John Starkweather from his wife Mary Ann, both prominent members of the Ypsilanti community. The building's unique stained-glass windows were designed by Tiffany of New York. The Starkweather family also funded many Ypsilanti landmarks, including Starkweather Hall at Eastern Michigan University, the Hebe Fountain on South Huron Street, and the Ladies Library Association building, Mary Ann Starkweather's former home.

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“The Starkweather Chapel is an historic jewel ready to shine once again, and the grant funding will help propel our project toward completion,” said Highland Cemetery board member, secretary, and historian Barry LaRue. “We are honored by the support and recognition of the Michigan Architectural Foundation.”

The late preservation architect Denis Schmiedeke extensively studied and documented the building, and assembled a team of professionals and community activists, including LaRue, before his death in 2016. LaRue kicked off the renovation in 2017, enlisting other volunteers and paid contractors. He anticipates that phase one of the renovation will be completed by July 2020, and phase two, to preserve the stained glass windows and repair building stones, will begin shortly thereafter.

In addition to Park Smith, AIA, MAF’s Evans Graham Preservation Award jury members are Randy Case, AIA; Kathryn Eckhert, Hon. AIA; Nancy Finegood; Annie West Graham; Bill Graham; Gene Hopkins, FAIA; Lis Knibbe, FAIA; Jessica Green Quijano, Assoc. AIA; Jennifer Radcliffe, Hon. AIA; Tom Roberts, AIA; Carl Roehling, FAIA; Ron Staley, Hon. AIA; and Les Tincknell, FAIAE.

For more information on Michigan Architectural Foundation’s Evans Graham Preservation Award, visit [michiganarchitecturalfoundation.org/grants/evans-graham-preservation-award/](http://michiganarchitecturalfoundation.org/grants/evans-graham-preservation-award/). For more information on historic Highland Cemetery, visit [www.highlandcemeterypsi.com/home.html](http://www.highlandcemeterypsi.com/home.html).

*The Michigan Architectural Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to advancing awareness of how architecture enriches life. By serving as a visible resource for funding, information, and educational programs, MAF increases the public’s appreciation for architecture, which in turn encourages cohesive, sustainable communities, increases economic value, and adds beauty to our built environment. For more information, visit [michiganarchitecturalfoundation.org](http://michiganarchitecturalfoundation.org).*

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