



MHPN 2023 Preservation Awards

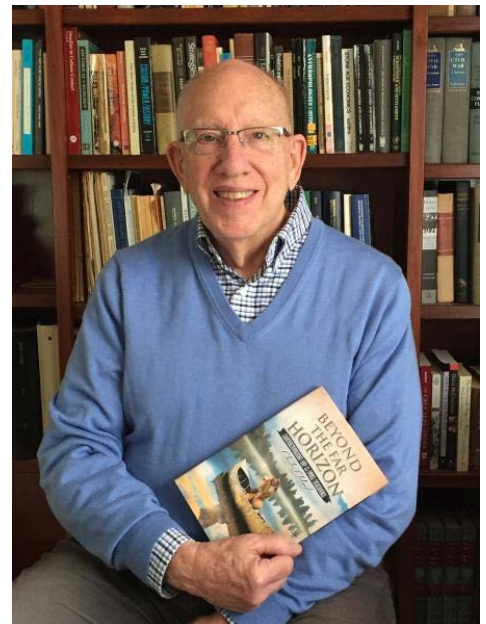
The Michigan Historic Preservation Network annually presents awards to outstanding projects, people, and organizations that exemplify historic preservation in Michigan. In 2023 twelve awards were presented in six categories.

Lifetime Achievement Awards



Janese Chapman, Detroit. For over 40 years, Janese has led the effort to protect and promote the historic places of Detroit as a historian and director of the city's Historic Designation Advisory Board. Janese graduated from the University of Michigan with a Master of History degree and served as a community Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before accepting a position with the City of Detroit in 1980. Since then, she has overseen the designation of hundreds of historic resources within the city as local historic districts. Janese has especially championed identification and protection of the city's Black history and honoring both the struggles and achievements of Black Detroiters. She has worked to interest young people in the city's history and make sure that all Detroiters feel included in the preservation of the city's heritage. Under her leadership, the Historic Designation Advisory Board has secured numerous national grants to fund historic surveys and designations. Janese is also an emeriti leader of the MHPN, serving on the board of directors from 1996 to 2005.

Charles E. Cleland, Charlevoix. Chuck earned his master's degree and PhD in archaeology at the University of Michigan and then joined the faculty at Michigan State University, where he focused his research interests on the Great Lakes region. Over the course of his career, Chuck made substantial contributions to understanding Native American history in the region, publishing several books and many scholarly articles. In addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses at MSU, he shepherded dozens of students to completion of their master's and doctoral dissertations. In 1978, MSU named him a Distinguished Professor of Anthropology. Chuck's passion for archaeology included a commitment of service to his profession. He was a founder and president of the Society for Historical Archaeology, earning the Society's J.C. Harrington Medal, its highest honor, in 2002. He served as an expert witness in trials regarding tribal treaty rights, where his contributions were often key to legal decisions. Chuck's love of Great Lakes history and his dedication to sharing his knowledge with others are truly lifetime achievements.





J. Michael Kirk, Dearborn. Mike dedicated his 45-year career to preserving the architectural and cultural heritage of Detroit, the State of Michigan, and the nation. He earned his Bachelor and Master of Architecture degrees from the University of Michigan. During his career, Mike worked for major firms including William Kessler & Associates, Jon Greenberg & Associates, SmithGroup, and finally Hannah-Neumann/Smith, as well as running his own practice from time to time. While he was still in college, Mike made the connection between preservation and sustainability, and is proud to have made significant contributions to mitigating the effects of climate change as part of his preservation practice. Dozens of historic places, many in Detroit and southeast Michigan, were restored or adapted under his supervision.

Mike has been a staunch supporter of the MHPN, serving on the board from 2010 to 2019. Among his greatest contributions to the organization were serving as the chair of the Preservation Incentives Committee and helping to rehabilitate the Thelma Joyce Osteen Comfort Station,

MHPN's current office. Mike retired in 2022 but remains active in the architecture and preservation communities in between fly fishing and traveling.

Phil Porter, Cheyboygan. Phil retired in 2020 from a 49-year career at Mackinac State Historic Parks, including 17 years as its director. His connection to the Straits stretched back to his boyhood spending summers with his family on Mackinac Island. While attending Kenyon College, Phil began working as a seasonal tour guide at Fort Mackinac and after graduating from the Cooperstown Graduate Program at the State University of New York he began his full-time career with the parks. Phil devoted his working life to not only preserving historic Mackinac Island and the other five sites that make up the Mackinac State Historic Parks, but also to finding the best ways to share these places with the public. He has written books, given numerous presentations and tours, and worked with colleagues and the public to develop educational programs. Under Phil's leadership, the Parks improved the way it honors and interprets Native American history and culture at the Straits. Phil Porter has inspired generations to understand and love the history of the Straits of Mackinac.

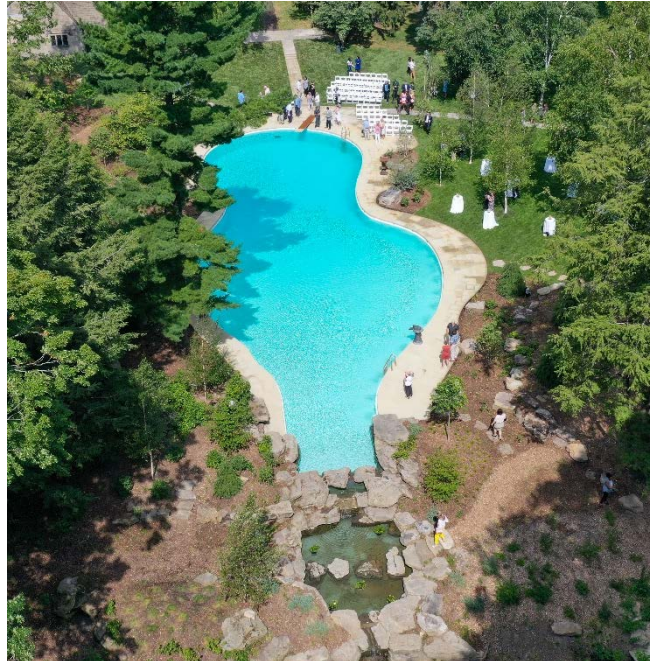




Gary Rentrop, Cross Village. As an attorney in the partnership of Rentrop & Morrison, Gary has devoted much of his career to advancing the cause of historic preservation. In the 1970s, he was involved in several landmark cases that have served as models for resource management. When historic Bay View near Petoskey was threatened by a road widening project in the 1970s, Gary stood up for the community and leveraged federal law to ensure that the project was redesigned to protect the National Historic Landmark-designated site. More recently, he assisted in establishing a Local Historic District on Mackinac Island and remains the Historic District Commission's counsel today. Gary has been a staunch supporter of the MHPN, helping guide the organization in developing its historic easement program and serving as a board member from 2012 to 2021. He remains an important ally to the organization. Gary Rentrop's dedication to creative problem-solving and to fighting the good fight when necessary has saved many irreplaceable historic resources.

Cultural Landscape Award

The Ford House Pool and Lagoon, Grosse Pointe Shores. In the summer of 2022, the Edsel & Eleanor Ford Estate in Grosse Pointe Shores celebrated the three-year restoration of the 1930s era pool and lagoon and surrounding landscape. Originally designed by architect Albert Kahn and landscape architect Jens Jensen, the pool and its landscape had gradually deteriorated due to erosion and weathering. Guided by historic photographs, films, and drawings, the restoration team rebuilt deteriorated portions of the pool structure and meticulously recreated the original pattern of the Scioto sandstone pavers using stone sourced from the original quarry. The ca. 1936 diving board was replicated and three lead figures were conserved and reinstalled in their historic locations. Finally, the plantings around the pool were restored based on Jensen's original vision and documents from the Ford House Archives. The restoration of the Pool & Lagoon was a unique challenge, but it offers the estate's guests the opportunity to be a witness to the past and experience a storied cultural landscape.



Building Awards



The Milton (Old-Merchants National Bank and Trust Company Building), Battle Creek. The 1931 Art Deco building, designed by the Chicago firm of Weary and Alford, was home to the largest financial institution between Detroit and Chicago. It featured a stunning domed bank lobby with offices in the tower. Old-Merchants occupied the building for a short time before closing during the Great Depression. Reopened by Security National Bank, it continued in use as a bank into the 2000s, but the upper floors gradually lost tenants. For a decade the building sat vacant while rainwater poured in and damaged the interior, and the tower faced condemnation. Its redevelopment took over three years and cost \$38 million, which included federal historic preservation tax credits as well as other funding sources. The most challenging aspect was replastering the banking lobby ceiling, which soared 45 feet above the floor. In the tower, 85 modern apartment units replaced the former offices. Renamed “The Milton,” the building’s apartments are now fully occupied and the ground floor is reactivated with commercial and event spaces. The most prominent feature of Battle Creek’s skyline is once again a vibrant catalyst for downtown investment.

Silver Birches Lodge, Mackinac Island. Silver Birches is a somewhat rare for Michigan example of an Adirondack style lodge, built between 1907 and 1912. By the time its current owner purchased the building, it had sat vacant for many years with significant structural damage, especially on the upper floors. Using an approach that balanced the building’s long-term potential with conserving its design intent, the ground floor and interior were fully retained and restored, while the deteriorated upper floors were reconstructed using a matching material palette. Every element of the project was complicated by working on an island with no motorized vehicles. Materials and workers had to be brought over by ferry in varied weather conditions and hauled to the site by horse-drawn wagons or on foot. Silver Birches Lodge, sitting vacant and falling apart for nearly two decades, is now a source of immense pride and accomplishment to those living on and visiting Mackinac Island.



Community Award



The Brighton Area Historical Society, for *The Old Village Cemetery Restoration*. Brighton's oldest cemetery, established in 1838, sits on a rise above the adjacent waters of Brighton's tranquil millpond and under a large canopy of mature trees. For many years the cemetery was closed due to vandalism and virtually invisible behind fencing and overgrown brush. Beginning in 2009, the Brighton Area Historical Society led a community effort to reopen and restore the beauty of the cemetery. The first step was a one-day cleanup every spring. As the heaviest brush and fallen trees were removed, volunteers gently cleared dirt and sod from fallen headstones. The BAHS engaged a conservator to train local volunteers how to repair headstones,

which has resulted in the rebuilding of 163 broken marble stones, and an additional 240 leaning stones were straightened and reset. Other work included new walkways, fencing, and a welcoming entrance gate. A walking tour booklet was developed that highlights the graves of veterans. Under the stewardship of the Brighton Area Historical Society, the Old Village Cemetery is now an attractive, welcoming, and accessible outdoor history museum and place of reflection.

Government/Institution Award

Community Homeworks, Kalamazoo, for effectively working at the intersection of preservation and affordable home ownership. This non-profit organization works to stabilize neighborhoods and, as importantly, the people who live in them. Community Homeworks' Critical Home Repair program assists qualified low-income homeowners with health and safety repairs and maintenance. The program applies to buildings 50 years or older, whether designated as historic or not, and repairs must be approved by Kalamazoo's Historic Preservation Coordinator. For as little as \$3,000 to \$5,000, the program can save a house from deterioration and demolition and help homeowners stay in their homes without incurring indebtedness. These efforts support the home, its block, neighborhood, town or city, and Michigan. Importantly, it supports the lives of the people who own the homes and provides an opportunity to help build multi-generational wealth. The positive outcomes of Community Homeworks' Critical Home Repair Program are best practices which should and could be replicated in every community that has homeowners in need and historic neighborhoods in danger of deterioration.



Tax Credit Awards



The Lofts on Rowe (Haskell Manufacturing Company), Ludington. This 1892 industrial brick building fronts a full city block on the edge of a residential neighborhood just north of Ludington's charming downtown. The building housed a series of manufacturing businesses, including Carom wooden games and Haskell Canoe Company, and served as the headquarters for the Civilian Conservation Corps' Camp Ludington in the 1930s. The building was vacant for nearly 30 years before it was rehabilitated to create 67 affordable loft apartments. The building's industrial character is featured in the exposed interior brickwork and original wood beams. Amenities available

to residents include a fitness room, bike storage, and on-site parking, while on the ground level is a commercial suite for local small businesses. Using historic tax credits, the Lofts on Rowe project revitalized a long abandoned and neglected historic building in the heart of the neighborhood, giving the city and region a historic asset that will serve residents and community members for decades to come.

The Press/321 (Detroit Free Press Building), Detroit. Designed by Albert Kahn and constructed in 1924, the 14-story Art Deco former Detroit Free Press Building housed the newspaper's operations, including writers, editors, and printing presses, for over 70 years. After sitting vacant for nearly 20 years, the building was fully rehabilitated using both state and federal historic tax credits. The exterior limestone façade was cleaned, windows installed to match the historic profiles, and the historic storefronts recreated. Historic spaces on the first floor including the lobby and advertising room were restored and primed for future retail or restaurant tenants, while the upper floors were converted into a mix of offices and residential apartments. The two-story sub-basement became the Midwest's first fully automated parking system. Through teamwork, innovation, and the restoration of significant details, the rehabilitation of the Detroit Free Press Building into The Press/321 brings the story of this monumental building to new generations of Detroiters.



In Memorium

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network also recognized members of the preservation community who passed on since the 2022 awards ceremony, as well as some people who we missed in earlier years.



John Dziurman, Rochester Hills



Kathryn Eckert, Leland



Charles Forbes, Bloomfield Hills



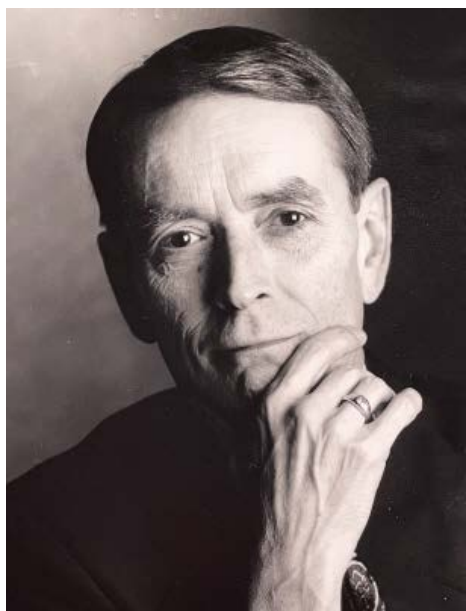
Carol Hale, Traverse City



Marcia Haynes, Port Huron



Thomas LaDuke, South Rockwood



Russell Cooper Lewis, Troy



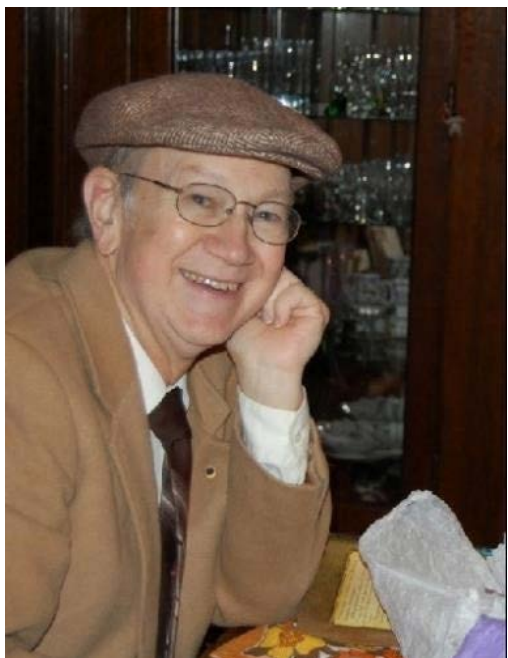
Graydon Meints, Kalamazoo



Samuel Milstein, Petoskey



Karen Nagher, Redford



Craig Nobbelin, Grand Rapids



Mark Rodman, Lansing



David Schon, Washington, DC



Ruth Adler Schnee, Colorado Springs, Colorado



James Skibo, Madison, Wisconsin