



## MHPN 2024 Preservation Awards

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network annually presents awards to outstanding projects, people, and organizations that exemplify historic preservation in Michigan. In 2024 fourteen awards were presented in six categories.

### *Lifetime Achievement Awards*



**Steve Bohnet**, Lansing. For over 45 years, Steve Bohnet has continued the legacy of his family's firm, Bohnet Electric, and its dedication to artistry and innovative craftsmanship in the repair and restoration of historic lighting. Founded in 1906, Bohnet Electric is Lansing's oldest electrical contractor, and Steve is the fourth generation to lead the firm. A graduate of Lansing Community College, Steve began stocking shelves in the family business while still in high school, working his way up to president. In addition to serving the electrical and lighting needs of Lansing's community, Steve's experience and craftsmanship in restoring vintage lighting is evident in many of the state's most iconic historic places. His work includes lighting restoration at the Belle Isle Aquarium and the Fisher Building in Detroit, Cranbrook Educational Community in Bloomfield Hills, the Tibbits Opera House in Coldwater, and the Cheboygan Opera House. In Lansing, Steve has worked at the Potter House, Turner Dodge House, Clara's Restaurant, and the Governor's Residence, among many others. As Steve once said of his career, "We're lighting the world, and I love what I do."



**Sally and Ian Bund**, Ann Arbor and Harbor Springs. Sally and Ian were honored for their shared commitment to ensuring Michigan's cultural legacy through conservation, stewardship, and advocacy. They have been at the forefront of preservation and conservation easements in Michigan, beginning with their own house, the 1923 Goss House in Ann Arbor. After restoring the house and its landscape and then successfully nominating the property to the National Register of Historic Places, they donated an easement to the MHPN that includes the house and six city lots, preserving the historic setting and protecting green space in the neighborhood. Their second home is at the historic Angell Farm in Harbor Springs, where they restored the 1893 farmhouse and 1900 barn and donated a conservation easement to the Little Traverse Conservancy. They have been leaders in land and energy conservation in the region, eradicating invasive plants in favor of native grasses and demonstrating the feasibility of solar energy that also respects the historic landscape. They support grassroots preservation efforts, establishing an endowed fund to steward the Vermilion Point Preserve on Lake Superior and serving on the Little Traverse Conservancy Board of Directors for over 20 years.

**Randy L. Case, AIA**, Battle Creek. Randy was honored for his distinguished career preserving the architectural and cultural heritage of Michigan, especially his longtime home, Battle Creek. Early in his career, Randy and his wife, Sue, decided to invest in a historic building in downtown Battle Creek to house their office. The rehabilitation of the Potter Building transformed the entire block and contributed to the revitalization of the downtown. Since opening his practice, most of Randy's work has taken place in Battle Creek and the surrounding area. Whether working as lead architect or as a preservation consultant, Randy's expertise has guided the restoration and rehabilitation of a long list of historic buildings, in Battle Creek, Marshall, Grand Rapids, and beyond. While his practice remained small by design, Randy has had an outsized impact on the architectural and preservation community in Michigan, serving numerous organizations including AIA Michigan, the Michigan Architectural Foundation and the MHPN, where he served as a board member from 2006-2015, as well as mentoring young architects and other preservationists.



**Robert E. Donohue, Jr.**, Commerce. Bob Donohue dedicated his 45-year career to historic preservation planning. After serving in the US Navy for four years, Bob graduated from the University of Michigan in 1979 and later earned a graduate certificate in Historic Preservation Planning from Eastern Michigan University. In the 1980s Bob served as a local planner, focusing on historic preservation, for communities including the City of Monroe, Livingston County, and Southfield. As the Executive Director of the Rochester DDA from 1991-1999, Bob's work included coordinating the rehabilitation of the historic Western Knitting Mill and developing architectural and historical tours of the downtown. In 1999, Bob became the principal planner for Main Street Oakland County, leading the establishment of the first full-service county-wide Main Street program in the United States. Bob retired from Oakland County in 2016, when he became the Executive Director of the South Lyon DDA, overseeing several major building and façade rehabilitation projects. Fully retired since 2020, Bob and his family live in an 1845 Greek Revival schoolhouse in Commerce Township, restored by the family as their home.







**Ron Koenig**, Saline. Ron was celebrated for his outstanding contributions to the field of architectural conservation and the decorative arts. Ron's conservation career began in 1988 as a decorative painter at the Michigan State Capital, where he restored numerous decorative finishes. After working on various conservation teams across the country, Ron founded his own practice, Building Arts & Conservation, in 1997. In the over 25 years since its founding, Ron has grown Building Arts & Conservation into one of the country's foremost architectural conservation practices. Ron's approach is comprehensive, using careful investigation, research, and documentation to guide his conservation work and ensure its accuracy. He and his team have worked on hundreds of projects across the country. In Michigan, his work includes several recent MHPN award-winning projects, such as restoring statues at the Ford House Pool and architectural conservation at the former Old Merchants National Bank and Trust, now the Milton in Battle Creek. Ron's career is also notable for his mentoring of young preservation professionals through internships as well as sharing his hands-on skills with students at field schools and workshops, enriching their future careers in preservation.



**Lorri D. Sipes**, Ann Arbor. Lorri Sipes' celebrated career as a preservation architect and historic consultant spans more than four decades. After earning her graduate degree in architecture from the University of Michigan in 1978, she immediately began working in the field of historic preservation, beginning with William Kessler and Associates of Detroit, restoring lighthouses, theaters, and courthouses. In 1984, she co-founded Architects Four, Inc., a historic preservation architecture firm. Lorri helped bring the firm to national prominence and participated in the restoration of the Michigan State Capitol. Architects Four merged with SmithGroup in 1999, and Lorri continued her preservation work there until 2004, when she established her own consulting practice. In 2009 she founded the Wood Window Repair Company. Lorri's work was recognized with over 20 awards on the local, state, and national level and she has been a frequent speaker at seminars and conferences. She was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 2001 for her contributions to the field of preservation in mentorship, teaching, and community activism.



**Elaine Robinson, Jackson. In Memoriam.**

In September 2023, the MHPN lost one of its greatest supporters – longtime board member, volunteer, and advocate Elaine Robinson. Elaine’s education, professional life, and volunteer work were focused on the field of historic preservation. Much of her career was spent at the Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group (now Chronicle Heritage), working for the organization for almost 30 years, becoming its Senior Architectural Historian and training and mentoring new professionals entering the field of cultural resource management with the firm. She was a particular champion of the rich and complex archaeological record of historic and pre-contact populations in Michigan. She recognized the significance of both high-style and vernacular architecture, and was a vocal proponent of protecting Michigan’s Mid-Century buildings.

Elaine's prodigious volunteer activities spanned her entire career, most notably with the MHPN. Elaine served multiple terms on the Board of Directors starting in 2005, including two terms as President in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. She co-chaired the statewide preservation conference seven times, bringing it to her hometown of Jackson in 2014; edited the newsletter and moderated our various media platforms; worked on year-end gift solicitations key to the MHPN’s financial health; established our “This Place Matters” campaign to crowd-source photos of historic properties from all over the state as members visited them; developed children’s educational programs; and served as a popular speaker for our conferences and community training programs.

Elaine is greatly missed by all who knew her.



## ***Building Awards***



**The Book Building and Tower**, Detroit. For nearly 100 years, the Book has been one of the most architecturally prominent buildings in Detroit. Designed by architect Louis Kamper, the thirteen story Book Building was built in 1917-1918 with the thirty-eight story Book Tower added in 1925-26. After successfully housing a series of retail, office, and professional businesses for many decades, the building was hit by declining occupancy and deferred maintenance, closing for good in 2009. From 2016 to 2023, the Book Building and Tower was extensively rehabilitated for mixed use office, hotel, and residential, including restoration of features like the twelve caryatids (female figures) on the cornice and the magnificent Keppler dome above the lobby.

With this rehabilitation, one of Detroit's last vacant skyscrapers comes back online in a manner befitting its illustrious past. The unique nature and large scale of this project serves as a prime example of iconic historic rehabilitation and effective adaptive re-use in the heart of a burgeoning city.

**Maplewood**, (Former Parks and Wooster buildings), Birmingham. Set on a prominent corner in the heart of downtown Birmingham, the Parks Building was built in 1889. In the 1960s, the original brick façade was replaced by a travertine covering. Just to the north, the Wooster Building was constructed in 1913-1914. Beginning in 2020, the buildings' new owner invested \$17.5 million to restore and rehabilitate the two structures. The brick façade of the Parks Building was meticulously recreated to match its historic appearance including limestone trim, decorative brickwork in the cornice, and compatible storefronts. The Wooster Building's non-historic storefront was replaced with one more appropriate to its historic character. The first floors of both buildings were combined into one retail space that houses a furniture store, while the upper floor serves as office space.



Maplewood integrates seamlessly into the historic core of downtown Birmingham, reclaiming a very important corner and contributing to a more walkable, vibrant, and beautiful city.

## **Citizen Awards**



**Aaron Sims**, Inkster. Aaron is a well-known figure in the Inkster community as the founder of Project We Hope Dream & Believe, which focuses on educating and empowering young people. In 2007, Aaron learned that the Inkster home of civil rights leader Malcolm X was still standing, but in danger of being demolished. Working with others in the community, Aaron led the effort to rescue the building from the demolition list. The home was cleaned and repaired while Aaron brought attention to the building's importance. Aaron worked with archeologists to undertake investigations at the house to reveal more of its past.

In 2014, his non-profit group finally acquired the building and in 2021 secured a major African American Civil Rights grant to rehabilitate it. Since late 2022, the building been undergoing extensive repair. Due to Aaron's efforts, the Malcolm X House has become an inspiring source of civic pride for the city of Inkster. Without a doubt, Aaron Sims is a pillar of his community and has invested a great

amount of time, labor, financial resources, in both the people of Inkster and in raising awareness of Malcolm X and his place in the city's history.

**Thomas Henthorn**, Flint. Thomas Henthorn was recognized for his work in preserving and promoting the history of Flint and its historic cemeteries. A professor of history at the University of Michigan-Flint, Dr. Henthorn shares his passion for history by uncovering and presenting the story of the Flint community. Among his most well-known efforts is the preservation of the Glenwood and Old Calvary Catholic cemeteries. In addition to research and presentations about historical figures resting in the cemeteries, Dr. Henthorn literally uncovers history through his annual headstone restoration course. Under his direction, students spend time learning physical preservation techniques as they clean, reassemble, and repair headstones.

Dr. Henthorn shares his expertise and insight into Flint's history in countless other ways, assisting with history bike rides, working with dozens of local history organizations, and telling the story of the Civic Park neighborhood. Dr. Henthorn was recently honored with the University of Michigan Regents Public Service Award for his work in preserving and sharing Flint's history in an accessible and memorable way.





## ***Community Award***

**Old Fourth Ward Association**, Ann Arbor, for more than 40 years of active and effective dedication to preserving Ann Arbor's architectural and cultural legacy. Throughout its lifetime, the Old Fourth Ward Association has promoted and advocated for an exceptional quality of life for neighborhood residents and businesses, recognizing that this mix contributes to its vitality and identity. The organization was instrumental in creating the Old Fourth Ward Historic District in 1983 and has remained consistently active through the years. A fierce advocate for historic preservation in the city, the association actively participates in local government initiatives and planned development that may affect the neighborhood. Members developed a strong education and outreach program including tours, street exhibits, and participation in the University of Michigan's "Beyond the Diag" program that provides resources to students living off campus. The Old Fourth Ward Association highlights successful adaptive reuse projects and promotes the use of emerging technologies to support historic preservation. It also offers an annual awards program recognizing community members for their preservation successes.



## ***Preservation Gem Award***

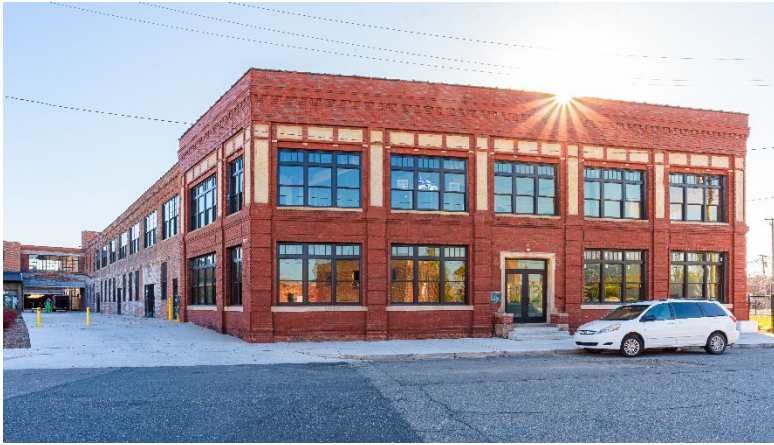


**Daniel B. Harrington Steam Locomotive**, Port Huron. The DB Harrington is a 2-4-0 narrow gauge steam engine built by Porter, Bell & Company of Pittsburgh for the Port Huron & Northwestern Railway in 1879. The locomotive and tender are significant pieces of Michigan railroading history. For many small communities in the Thumb, the Harrington served as the first rail connection to the outside world, hauling lumber from camps to be processed at sawmills and providing light passenger service. The locomotive continued in operation pulling log trains throughout Michigan until the 1920s. After several decades on display at various parks, the engine eventually came to the Port Huron Museums for restoration.

Partnering with the Community Foundation of St. Clair County, Port Huron Museums undertook a comprehensive restoration of the Harrington. Original pieces were refurbished wherever possible, while missing or severely worn components were accurately replicated using historic photographs and blueprints. St. Clair County Community College provided space as well as students to help with the work. In early 2023, the restored

locomotive was installed in its new location in a downtown Port Huron mixed-use building and the final details completed before the ribbon-cutting. It now stars as the centerpiece of shared cultural heritage and helps to tell the story of early railroad history.

## ***Tax Credit Award***



**Dreamtroit** (Warren Motor Car Company factory), Detroit. The complex of five automotive manufacturing buildings was built from 1910 to 1917 to the designs of prominent Detroit architects Rogers and McFarland. After the Warren Motor Car Company went bankrupt, the factory was eventually purchased by the newly formed Lincoln Motor Company and later by Ford Motor Company. The buildings embody the distinctive characteristics of early automobile manufacturing and are associated with the early automotive industry in Detroit.

After housing varied tenants from the 1930s until 2020, the buildings were rehabilitated into a mixed-use housing development called Dreamtroit. Using a complex financial structure that relied heavily on Historic Tax Credits (HTCs), the project repaired and restored the masonry facades, including cast stone and limestone trim; installed historically accurate windows; and restored character-defining interior materials.

Dreamtroit's adaptive reuse has spurred substantial growth and diversification. By repurposing underutilized spaces, the project has introduced a diverse array of tenants, including affordable residential apartments, artist studios and commercial establishments. This mix of uses fosters a dynamic and inclusive community, contributing to the neighborhood's vibrancy and resilience.



## *In Memoriam*

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network also recognized members of the preservation community who passed on since the 2023 awards ceremony.



**Wesley L. Andrews**, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, tribal historian.



**Leo Brian Early**, Friends of the Grande Ballroom



**Gary Cooper**, Architect and Landscape Architect



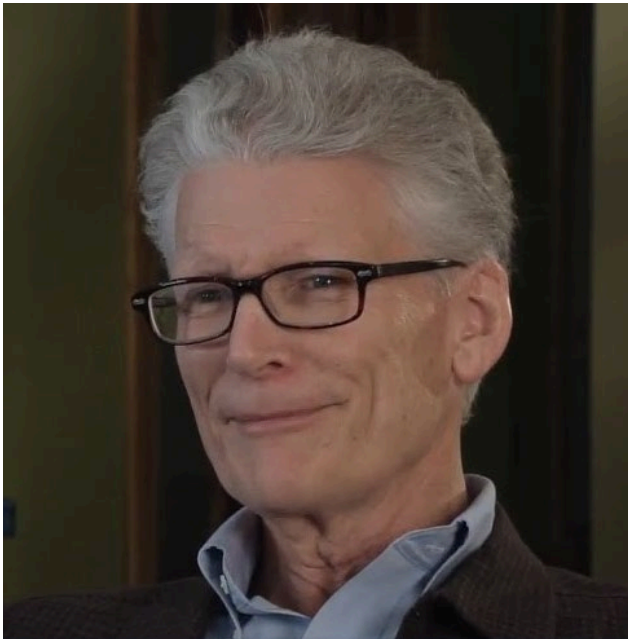
**Michael Higgins**, Detroit developer



**Gordon Olson**, Grand Rapids historian



**Leslie Tincknell**, FAIA, preservation architect



**Jeffrey Wilcox**, Saugatuck-Douglas historian



**Samantha Woll**, President, Isaac Agree Synagogue, oversaw its restoration.