



MHPN 2026 Preservation Awards

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network annually presents awards to outstanding projects, people, and organizations that exemplify historic preservation in Michigan. In 2026 sixteen awards were presented in six categories.

Lifetime Achievement Awards



Dan Austin, Detroit. For over two decades, Dan Austin has been one of Detroit's most dedicated and passionate historians. Through his research, writing, and photography, he has transformed how we understand the city's architectural and cultural legacy. As the founder of HistoricDetroit.org, Dan has documented hundreds of Detroit's landmarks, both lost and still standing, ensuring that our built environment is not forgotten. By championing the preservation of Detroit's built heritage, he has fostered a deeper connection to the city's identity for everyone—whether they are residents, visitors, or simply people fascinated by its unique history.



Rainy Hamilton Jr., Detroit. Rainy Hamilton Jr. has spent his career doing exactly what he set out to do: rebuilding Detroit one building, one block, one neighborhood at a time. Rainy co-founded Hamilton Anderson Associates in 1994, a firm that has grown into the largest African-American-owned design firm in Michigan, with a portfolio that reads like a map of Detroit's revival. Throughout, historic preservation has been central to his practice, always grounded in his belief that good design starts with understanding what's already there. His commitment to equity and inclusion within the profession has been just as deliberate and just as lasting as his built work.



William A. Lovis, Williamston. William A. Lovis spent his more than five-decade career uncovering and interpreting Michigan's rich archaeological record. As Professor Emeritus and former Curator of Anthropology at Michigan State University, his groundbreaking multidisciplinary research has reshaped our understanding of how early people lived and adapted to the shifting environment of the Great Lakes region. Dr. Lovis has consistently championed the intersection of earth sciences and archaeology. Beyond his academic achievements, he has been a leader in the ethical stewardship of Indigenous history, advocating for the return of cultural artifacts to their rightful communities through his dedicated work with NAGPRA.



Patrick J. McKay, Rochester Hills. Pat McKay has served as Museum Manager of the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm for 40 years, guiding restoration of the National Register-listed complex, including a \$3.5 million barn roof and rebuild completed during the pandemic. Under his leadership the museum draws over 70,000 visitors annually through programs blending history, education, and community life. He has mentored other communities including Holly's Heritage Farmstead restoration, and serves as a 30-year part-time firefighter/EMT with Rochester Hills Fire Department—reflecting deep, sustained community engagement alongside his preservation work.



Ronald D. Staley, Brighton. For over forty years, Ronald D. Staley has shaped the field of historic preservation, directing the rehabilitation of landmark structures across Michigan and nationwide. As the leader of the Christman Company's historic preservation division, he oversaw more than 200 projects of national significance. The transformation of Detroit's Michigan Central Station represents the culmination of his decades in the field. Ron's commitment to excellence extends to his role as an author, educator, and advocate, ensuring traditional building crafts remain vital in modern construction. By prioritizing technical authenticity, he has equipped a new generation of craftspeople to care for our shared architectural legacy.



Dr. Richard B. Stamps, Rochester Hills. Dr. Stamps taught anthropology and archaeology at Oakland University from 1974 to 2012. He led fieldwork and cultural resource surveys at Fort Michilimackinac, Fort Gratiot, Thomas Edison's Port Huron boyhood home, and other Michigan sites, and conducted a pilot archaeological survey of Oakland County. His analysis of the Scotford-Soper-Savage Michigan Relics remains a reference point in the state's archaeology. He extended this work into K-12 education through the Waterford School District and organized Oakland University's 50th-anniversary archaeology celebration in 2024. His honors include OU's Teaching Excellence Award, the OU Alumni Association's Honorary Alumnus Award, and the Earl Borden Historical Preservation Award from Rochester Hills.

Building Awards



Clark Memorial Hall, Adrian. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places since 1985, Clark Memorial Hall is one of downtown Adrian's most distinguished landmarks. By the early 1990s, neglected maintenance had set this 1888 Second Empire gem on a slow decline. That changed in 2015, when new owners purchased the building, established a business on the ground floor, made the upper floors their home, and committed to a full exterior restoration — entirely at their own expense. Completed in 2025 after five years of painstaking work, the project replaced the mansard roof, rebuilt the ornate copper balcony from scratch, stripped and repointed the historic masonry, and recreated original woodwork and ornamental details throughout.



Sleeping Bear Inn, Glen Haven. The Sleeping Bear Inn holds a remarkable distinction: it is the oldest inn within any National Park Service unit, predating even Yellowstone's Old Faithful Inn. Built around 1864 in Glen Haven, it served frontier travelers and Great Lakes steamship crews for over a century — then sat vacant for fifty years. That changed when a nonprofit partnered with the National Park Service on a full rehabilitation, completed in July 2024. The project stabilized the foundation, restored original windows and siding in kind, and carefully integrated modern systems — all while following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards throughout. The Inn is open again as a bed-and-breakfast, connecting visitors to Michigan's maritime heritage in the finest surviving Great Lakes frontier steamboat town.



Port Austin Reef Light, Port Austin. Once known as the "Castle on the Lake," the Port Austin Reef Light faced severe decay after decades of neglect. Its survival is thanks to a determined local nonprofit and a three-year restoration effort completed in 2025. This project combined technical precision with deep community roots. Divers salvaged original bricks from the surrounding reef for masonry repairs, and a historic staircase—originally built for the light—was returned to the structure after decades away. From traditional plaster work to the installation of a new Fresnel lens, every detail preserves Michigan's maritime history. Supported by state grants and local donations, the lighthouse is now fully restored and open for public tours.

Citizen Award



Alana Paluszewski, Wyandotte. Alana Paluszewski has spent decades making sure that history isn't lost. A lifelong Wyandotte resident and sixth-generation community member, she has worked as a historian, author, and genealogist, bringing regional history to wide audiences through books, articles, and community programs. Her research identified eleven local World War II servicemen missing from a city monument — and she helped lead the effort to add their names. She initiated and led the fundraising effort to restore five rare 1942 WPA murals at Theodore Roosevelt High School, raising nearly \$100,000, then co-authored a restoration guide now held by the Library of Congress. Alana Paluszewski has given Wyandotte's history both a voice and a future.

Government-Institution Award

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN



City of Birmingham Historic Preservation Master Plan.

Too often, historic preservation planning is reactive — responding to demolition proposals one building at a time. The City of Birmingham decided to get ahead of the problem. Developed entirely in-house by the City's Planning Department and Historic District Commission, Birmingham's first Historic Preservation Master Plan is a proactive, long-range strategy built on strong public engagement. Ninety-four percent of survey respondents called historic preservation a worthwhile goal. Sixty-three percent said the city should be expanding its recognized historic resources. The resulting 64-page plan includes GIS mapping of the city's building stock, 31 specific action recommendations, and a clear road map for implementation — coordinated with four other master plans adopted in the same period.

Preservation Gem Awards



J.B. Book Mansion Solarium, Detroit. The J.B. Book Mansion in Detroit's Indian Village was designed in 1910 by architect Louis Kamper for one of the city's most influential real estate families. The project being recognized focused on a single room: the Solarium, which had suffered decades of neglect and was leaking so badly the owners called it the rain room. The restoration team saved every original element possible, recreated what was missing, and devised a clever skylight solution that protects the restored ceiling grid while preserving the original visual effect from inside.



Henry and Clara Ford Bedroom, Fair Lane, Dearborn. The Fords' bedroom was their private retreat, and the room where Henry Ford died in 1947 by candlelight during a historic flood. Converted to offices under later stewardship, it had accumulated decades of changes before a meticulous restoration returned it to the way the Fords knew it. The work included infrared treatment of 84 delicate plaster acanthus leaves, hand-reshaping of over a thousand dentil moldings, and the recreation of the original silk wall coverings — traced through tack marks, a single photograph, and archival research — woven on jacquard looms using historically accurate dyes.

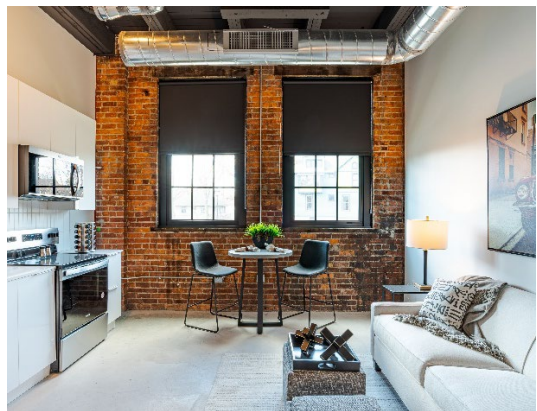
Tax Credit Awards



Piquette Flats, Detroit. Detroit's Milwaukee Junction neighborhood is home to a compelling example of historic tax credits at work. The former Studebaker Service Building at 411 Piquette Avenue — a 1920 Albert Kahn design that spent years sitting quiet — has been transformed into 161 residential units, with roughly 40 percent priced below 80 percent of the area median income. The rehabilitation restored the building's brick and concrete façade, replaced glass block infill with historic replica factory windows, and preserved Kahn's distinctive concrete columns throughout. Financing combined federal historic tax credits, brownfield credits, a city tax abatement, and a state loan.



Residences at St. Matthew, Detroit. St. Matthew Catholic School in Detroit's East English Village educated over a thousand students at its peak before closing in 2008. After nearly a decade vacant, the school and its activities building have been thoughtfully transformed into 46 affordable residential units — 25 of them dedicated to permanent supportive housing for individuals who have experienced homelessness. The rehabilitation preserved the buildings' brick and limestone exteriors, historic terrazzo floors, plaster walls, and even classroom chalkboard frames. The former gymnasium is now a shared gathering space for residents. A layered financing structure combining historic tax credits, low-income housing tax credits, and city funds made it possible.



Red Arrow Lofts, Detroit. The building at 1567 Church Street in Corktown has been part of Detroit for nearly 130 years — first as a planing mill, then as home to the Red Arrow Bottling Company, and eventually as a self-storage warehouse. It came close to being demolished for a parking garage before community opposition changed the outcome. The result is Red Arrow Lofts: 28 loft-style apartments that preserve the building's exposed timber framing, brick walls, wood floors, and distinctive rooftop monitors with clerestory windows. A former equipment bay is now a double-height resident lounge with a skybridge overhead. Historic tax credits, brownfield incentives, and a state loan made it financially possible. Community advocacy made it happen.

In Memoriam

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network also recognized members of the preservation community who passed on since the 2024 awards ceremony.



Eleanor Andrews
Champion of Tribal Culture
and Language Revitalization



Lynne Goldstein
MSU Archaeologist and Mentor



Nicholas L. Bozen
Legal Counsel for SHPO and Review Board



Barbara Krueger
Stained Glass Expert and Advocate



Heather Burnash
Passionate Advocate for Flint's Heritage



Sydney Marie Martin
Cultural Preserver of Tribal Heritage



Ed Deeb
Devoted to Detroit's History and Civic Life



George Miller
Archaeologist with Deep
Expertise in Ceramics



Agnes Louise Dikeman
Cornerstone of Saline's Historical community



Lisa Rush
Mainstay of Preservation Detroit