



OKLAHOMA HERITAGE Association

GAYLORD-PICKENS Museum

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Oklahoma Heritage Association honors leaders in preserving state history

OKLAHOMA CITY – Many Oklahomans recall taking one or two Oklahoma history courses while in school and then moving on with their lives. But some across the state have made the preservation and promotion of that history their life’s work.

The Oklahoma Heritage Association’s annual awards recognize the educators, individuals and organizations that are committed to preserving state and local history and sharing that proud heritage with others. Seven individuals and organizations will be recognized at the Association’s Annual Membership Meeting & Awards Luncheon on March 31 at the Renaissance Tulsa Hotel & Convention Center.

Thrissa A. Johnson, Fort Gibson Public Schools, is the recipient of the Indian Territory Award for Excellence in Teaching Oklahoma History. A humanities instructor at Fort Gibson High School, Johnson incorporates Oklahoma history into her curriculum. Her students annually visit Fort Gibson historical sites and learn new skills from Native American craftsmen she hosts in the classroom. At Johnson’s urging, students annually volunteer during “Old Fort Days,” and her classes have participated in virtual field trips of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

Charlotte Smith, Classen School of Advanced Studies, is the recipient of the Edward L. & Thelma Gaylord Oklahoma Territory Award for Excellence in Teaching Oklahoma History. Smith incorporates diverse topics into her Oklahoma history curriculum, including the origins of urban and rural music in Oklahoma, desegregation, historical native Oklahomans and European arrivals. Her goal in the classroom is to instill within her students a respect for their heritage and a pride stemming from the role Oklahoma has played in building the nation.

Bill Bryans, Oklahoma State University, is the recipient of the Bass/McCasland Award for Excellence in Teaching Oklahoma History. Since 1988, Dr. Bryans has directed the Applied History program at OSU and considers his greatest accomplishment the direction of 41 students in completing their Applied History M.A. degrees. His teaching components consist of lecture, extracurricular activities and required volunteer service to Oklahoma museums. His students write National Register of Historic Places nominations and participate in Oklahoma Natural



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History Day. Bryans serves on a number of museum and historical organization boards and is a published historian.

T.L. Walker, Ponca City, is the recipient of the Oklahoma Heritage Distinguished Service Award for Preservation of State and Local History. As executive director of the Standing Bear Foundation, Walker has developed new educational programming and partnerships and plays an important role in the community's preservation of its history and cultural diversity. Since 2000, she has visited every kindergarten classroom in the district, reaching more than 5,000 students, to enrich the concept of cultural differences. Walker's enthusiasm for the rich history available in the Foundation's museum provides each guest a memorable experience and new level of appreciation and respect for the stories found within.

The Marland Estate Foundation, Ponca City, is the recipient of the Edward L. & Thelma Gaylord Oklahoma Territory Award for Preservation of State and Local History. Purchased by Ponca City citizens through a sales tax vote in 1975, the Marland Mansion has become a tourism destination and well-known event space. The Foundation works tirelessly to maintain and improve the mansion to ensure its access by future generations. Completed projects include restoration of ceilings, Lydie Marland's cottage and artist studio, and the statues of Lydie and George Marland. The Foundation is currently completing the walking trails to make the grounds more accessible to visitors and campaigning for funding to establish a Welcome Center.

The Indian Territory Marshals, Muskogee, is the recipient of the Indian Territory Award for Preservation of State and Local History. Through appearances and performances, the Indian Territory Marshals have been promoting Oklahoma's Old West for more than 30 years. The mission of the organization is to advance and promote Muskogee, Oklahoma history, and law and order. Usually arriving in town dressed in period clothing and with guns blazing, the organization's re-enactors teach history through entertainment. Organized and operated by volunteers, any monies raised go directly back to the needy community members.

The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, is the recipient of the Oklahoma Heritage Distinguished Editorial Award for Preservation of State and Local History. For 86 years the Oklahoma Historical Society has been publishing *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, which is a quarterly journal distributed to subscribers and members of the OHS. Each issue includes approximately five historical articles, photographs, illustrations, book reviews and documents relative to the preservation of Oklahoma's history. *The Chronicles* features the entire state and recent topics include American Indian health care, African-American home extension agents, aviation, and biographies of well-known and not-so-well-known Oklahomans.

Individual reservations for the 11:30 a.m. luncheon and 12 p.m. awards ceremony are \$40, and sponsorship opportunities are available. Duane King, Jr., vice president for museum affairs and executive director for the Gilcrease Museum, will speak on "The Life and Works of Willard



OKLAHOMA HERITAGE Association

GAYLORD-PICKENS Museum

Stone.” To purchase luncheon reservations, call 405.523.3205 or toll free 888.501.2059. To learn more about the Oklahoma Heritage Association, annual awards program or Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum, visit www.oklahomaheritage.com.

The Oklahoma Heritage Association is dedicated to preserving Oklahoma history and promoting pride in our great state. Through each of its programs and the Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, the Association strives to tell Oklahoma’s story through its people.

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