For Immediate Release

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North Carolina Museums Council (NCMC) Recently Announced Award Recipients

The North Carolina Museums Council recently recognized a slate of award winners. The 2022 winners were nominated for work completed in 2021 then selected through a process of peer review. This awards program provides a vehicle for promoting excellence in North Carolina museums and related institutions. Several awards were bestowed this year in the following categories: Special Recognition, Professional Service, Excellence, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI), and William T. Alderson Lifetime Achievement.

**Awards of Special Recognition**

This award honors an individual, group, or business affiliated with a museum in North Carolina who has demonstrated significant interest and support in the programs, goals, and policies or made significant contributions of time, money, or ideas to a museum in the state. This year two were awarded:

Firstly, to Tom Spada, President of the Historic Rosedale Board of Directors. Tom was nominated by the staff at Rosedale, who said that his leadership has been vital to the site. They pointed out that Tom’s talents were tested in April of 2021 when the Foundation’s Executive Director departed unexpectedly and the site was left with little staff and no leadership. Tom rose to the challenge by taking charge of the situation. He brought back previous staff members, put in an ungodly number of onsite hours, and helped to maintain a positive environment. He continues to work with staff to assure programming continues, new ideas are generated, and financial solvency is at the forefront of everyone’s mind. Without his efforts there was a distinct possibility the site would have simply closed its doors.

Our next Special Recognition goes to Manisa Vongnalath, who was the selected student graphic designer to undertake re-designing the NCMC logo. She worked with Council members on style and font for well over 9 months resulting in a visual representation of the future vision of the North Carolina Museums Council. Through it all Manisa rolled with all the adjustments while carrying a full student load, among other responsibilities. The annual conference marked the rollout of the new logo!

**Professional Service Award**

The Professional Service Award is presented to an individual currently employed at a North Carolina museum, distinguished in the museum field and/or and who has professionally advanced the role of museums or that of the North Carolina Museums Council.

This award is presented to Karl McKinnon, Assistant Director/CFO at the Schiele Museum. Karl began his career as a weekend zookeeper at the Natural Science Center in Greensboro. He then grew his career as he served in leadership roles at the Dan Nicholas Park Nature Center, the Rocky Mount Children’s Museum, and Imagination Station before landing at the Schiele about 14 years ago. Throughout his career, Karl has consistently sought to share his passion for museums and lend his expertise to presentations at colleague conferences and serving on various boards (including NCMC) and collaborative networks.

**Award of Excellence**

The Award of Excellence is intended to honor exhibits, publications, or programs that exemplify excellence in the museum field. This competition showcases the best in our profession and in doing so promotes excellence and professionalism across the state. Nominations for the Awards of Excellence must have been completed during the 2021 calendar year. This year, two Awards of Excellence were presented:

The first is to the Carteret County Historical Society who celebrated their 50th birthday in style last year with exhibitions and special events to commemorate their dedication to the history they preserve. The documentary film created as a part of the commemoration traces the county’s past and is the centerpiece of a new exhibit, “Anchoring our Past to the Present.” The project receives accolades from the press and the visiting public.

Next, is the North Carolina Museum of History for their work to make available their award winning “Story of North Carolina“ through a 360 degree virtual tour through exhibit space for students and families during the pandemic when the museum was closed to the public. Furthermore, the online virtual tour makes the museum’s vast resources available to the whole of North Carolina’s learners, regardless of whether they live in Raleigh, Ocracoke, or Cullowhee. Additionally, the student-oriented version of the tour contains material in “hot spots” not included in the exhibit gallery to heighten the experience.

**Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) Award**

The Board continues its dedication to the principles of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) across the museum field. Created in 2020, this award seeks to celebrate organizations and programs advancing the museum field in these areas, both internally through workplace culture and programs and externally through engagement with museum audiences and communities.

This year’s Diversity Equity Accessibility and Inclusion Award goes to the NC Maritime Museum at Southport. Museum Director Lori Sanderlin and Curator of Education Katy Menne have worked tirelessly to make the museum more accessible for patrons of all ages and abilities. After the launch of the semi-guided multi-lingual tour, tactile maps followed. With accommodations being made for Deaf patrons, the crew wanted to assure patrons with low vision or total blindness could also enjoy autonomous learning.

**William T. Alderson Lifetime Achievement Award**

This award was established to recognize retired museum professionals for a lifetime of service and to demonstrate NCMC's respect and admiration for the body of work these professionals accomplished in their careers.

Martha B. Jackson was recognized for her over forty years of experience in museums. Jackson utilized her wide array of museum skills and collections management knowledge on behalf of museums and sites across North Carolina. Her dedication to professional development – providing training, mentoring, guidance, and encouragement to hundreds of emerging, mid-career, and senior museums professionals, formally and informally shined in her letters of support. Jackson not only served North Carolina; she also donated her time as a MAP reviewer with The American Association of Museums (AAM), and the Administrator of the SEMC Jekyll Island Management Institute (JIMI). Now retired, her legacy has had a profound effect not only on North Carolina museums but also on museum professionals throughout the United States.

The North Carolina Museums Council awards were presented at their annual conference held in Rocky Mount, NC in March 2022. In 2023, the annual conference will be hosted in Gastonia, NC. Award nominations will open later in this year.

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The North Carolina Museums Council (NCMC) is a 501(c)(3) serving institutions of all sizes within the State of North Carolina. Building better museums together is reached through enhanced public education by improving the administrative, interpretive, and collections practices of all museums, including history, science, art and children’s institutions and related facilities in North Carolina. NCMC promotes goals of encouraging the continual improvement of standards and practices of all professionals in history, science, art and children’s institutions and related facilities across the state; stimulating public support and understanding for the work performed by those facilities; providing a forum in which Council members can exchange ideas, as well as foster cooperation and improved communication amongst themselves, as well as with the communities they serve; and promoting North Carolina museums throughout the state, the region, and the nation through its members and activities.

For more information on awards, visit ncmuseums.org or contact LeRae Umfleet, Awards Chair at awards@ncmuseums.org