



Historical Society of Michigan

# News Release

For Immediate Release: Sept. 26, 2014

## 2014 State History Awards Presented in Big Rapids, Mich.

The Historical Society of Michigan (HSM) awarded **15 top honors** during its annual **State History Conference**, which was held in **Big Rapids, Mich.**, Sept. 26-28, 2014. The Society presents the State History Awards every year to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the appreciation, collection, preservation and/or promotion of state and local history. The awards are the highest recognition presented by the Historical Society of Michigan, the state's official historical society and oldest cultural organization.

**The winners are:** (Detailed descriptions of each recipient are listed at the end of this news release.)

- Lifetime Achievement Award—**Kaye Hiebel** from **Marquette**
- Distinguished Volunteer Service—**Marge Sawruk** from **White Lake**
- Books: University & Commercial Press—
  - “Arsenal of Democracy: The American Automobile Industry in World War II” by **Charles K. Hyde, Wayne State University Press**
  - “Cholera in Detroit: A History” by **Richard Adler, McFarland & Company, Inc.**
  - “Detroit: Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide” by **Joe T. Darden** and **Richard Thomas, Michigan State University Press**
  - “Holland, Michigan: From Dutch Colony to Dynamic City” by **Robert P. Swierenga, Van Raalte Press**, in partnership with **William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company**
  - “‘Old Slow Town’: Detroit During the Civil War” by **Paul Taylor, Wayne State University Press**
- Books: Private Printing—

## At A Glance...

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High-resolution photos are available for all award recipients. Contact HSM.



Books: Private Printing  
—“Schools of Yesteryear  
Volume II” by Janis Stein



Communications:

- “Perry Hannah’s Gifts: Then and Now” by **Peg Jonkhoff** and **Fred Hoisington**
- “Schools of Yesteryear Volume II” by **Janis Stein**
- Books: Children & Youth—“Hunter’s Quest: Finding Heritage and Friendship in Southwest Michigan” by author **Mara MacKay** (aka Mara Mae) and illustrator **Dan Smith**
- Communications: Newsletters and Websites—**The Ford Legend**, newsletter produced by the **Henry Ford Heritage Association**
- Education: Educator—**Kelly Eddy** from **Ann Arbor**, teacher at **Churchill High School** in **Livonia**
- Local Societies—**Leelanau Historical Society**
- Special Programs/Events—**Grosse Pointe Historical Society’s** “Legends of the Lake”
- Best Article in Michigan History magazine—“A Weed Goes to War” by **Gerald Wykes**

This year also marks the **140th anniversary** of the Historical Society of Michigan’s State History Conference. The Society is celebrating this milestone **in conjunction with the 130th anniversary of Ferris State University**, a statewide sponsor for the conference. Other sponsors and supporters for this year’s conference are Chemical Bank, City of Big Rapids, Mecosta County Historical Society, Ice Mountain, Schuberg Insurance Agency and Spectrum Health Big Rapids Hospital.

The State History Conference explores significant people, places and events in Michigan’s past through a diverse offering of keynote speakers, breakout sessions, workshops and tours. Each year, the conference moves to a different location within the Lower Peninsula to feature the local history of that area and to address notable statewide historical matters. The Historical Society of Michigan also hosts the Upper Peninsula History Conference, which focuses on the history of the U.P., and Michigan in Perspective: The Local History Conference, which concentrates on Southeast Michigan and statewide history.

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The recipient of the 2014 State History Award in the Lifetime Achievement category is **Kaye Hiebel** from **Marquette**. For the past 34 years, Hiebel has been the driving force behind the Marquette County Historical Society’s (MCHS), now the Marquette Regional History Center’s (MRHC), dynamic and innovative educational programs and museum exhibitions. Hiebel began her career with MCHS in 1980, but her crowning achievement came after she was appointed executive director of the MCHC in 2005. At that time, she

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Best Article in Michigan  
History magazine—“A

began the herculean task of finding a new building for the society's museum and library, launching an incredibly successful \$3.75 million capital campaign. Today, thanks to her efforts, the Marquette Regional History Center is a recognized state-of-the-art museum and historical research facility, second to none in the upper Great Lakes region.

The Historical Society of Michigan recognizes the important work of **Marge Sawruk** from **White Lake** with the State History Award for Distinguished Volunteer Service. The Fisk Farm, a historic complex that was slated for demolition, survives today because Sawruk worked to save it on its original site. Now restored, the farm serves as a focal point for an annual festival that raises much of the White Lake Historical Society's operating revenue. Later, she spearheaded the effort to save the one-room 1876 Thompson School and move it to the farm property. Sawruk serves as a docent for tours, edits the society's newsletter, wrote the text for the society's coloring and activity book, and works with numerous other historical organizations.

A State History Award in the Books: University & Commercial Press category has been presented to **Charles K. Hyde** and **Wayne State University Press** for "Arsenal of Democracy: The American Automobile Industry in World War II." In this book, the author masterfully examines the role played by the American automobile industry in the production miracle that was a major factor in defeating the Axis powers in World War II. The transformation of a civilian industry into a wartime manufacturing powerhouse was a success story of organization and innovation. The variety and quantity of military hardware produced in the former automobile plants was staggering, and it swamped enemies who could not produce at the same level.

A State History Award in the Books: University & Commercial Press category has been presented to "Cholera in Detroit: A History" by **Richard Adler, McFarland & Company, Inc.** In 1832, cholera reared its ugly head in Detroit, carrying off many citizens and terrifying the populace of the rapidly growing city. Four more significant outbreaks in the city would follow as late as the 1860s. In this book, the author examines the history of cholera in Detroit during the mid-19th century from the perspectives of historian and physician. His narrative is supported by solid sources, and his medical training gives him an understanding of both the science and the history of science as they relate to cholera and the fight against the disease.

A State History Award in the Books: University & Commercial Press category has been presented to "Detroit: Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial

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Divide” by **Joe Darden** and **Richard Thomas**, published by **Michigan State University Press**. The race riots of 1967 had an enormous impact on Detroit’s history, but the narrative of racial conflict has often obscured the lesser-known but equally important episodes of interracial cooperation in seeking solutions to the city’s problems. Thoroughly researched, this book does not mire the reader in endless statistics and academic jargon. It is immensely readable and a “must have” for anyone interested in the history of race relations in America.

A State History Award in the Books: University & Commercial Press category has been presented to “Holland, Michigan: From Dutch Colony to Dynamic City” by **Robert P. Swierenga**, **Van Raalte Press**, in partnership with **William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company**. Every community in Michigan should have the good fortune to have someone write its history in as comprehensive and readable fashion as this three-volume set. The author has penned a masterful study of the city founded in 1847 by Dutch immigrants who sought religious and economic freedom. His books trace the town’s history from a Christian colony of Ottawa Indians that settled there in 1839 to a description of Holland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These books prove that the history of a single community can be entertaining, thought-provoking, and just plain fun.

A State History Award in the Books: University & Commercial Press category has been presented to ““Old Slow Town’: Detroit During the Civil War” by **Paul Taylor**, **Wayne State University Press**. Although far from the fighting, Detroit was the center of Michigan’s significant participation in the Civil War. In this book, the author carefully examines the many issues and events in Detroit during the war and shows how Michigan’s largest city and its people were affected by the conflict.

The Society presented a 2014 State History Award in the Publications: Private Printing category to authors **Peg Jonkhoff** and **Fred Hoisington** for their book, “Perry Hannah’s Gifts: Then and Now.” The book showcases the life and times of Perry Hannah, **Traverse City**’s founding father, and celebrates the heritage of the Grand Traverse region. When Hannah arrived in the sparsely settled wilderness in 1851, he envisioned his new home would be the “Queen City of the North” and started building it. Now, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Hannah’s fingerprint is evident as the region continues to grow and prosper. This volume shines a light on the man, the vision and the gifts that created a thriving, sustainable community.

In the category of Books: Private Printing, the Society

presented a State History Award for the publication “Schools of Yesteryear Volume II” by **Janis Stein**. As the second volume in a series, this well-researched book focuses on rural one-room schools in **Bingham, Paris and Sheridan Townships of Huron County**; the first volume covered the histories of schoolhouses in Sand Beach and Sherman Townships. At one point, there were 7,000 one-room schools in Michigan, and about 100 of them were in Huron County. Today, there are 18 across Michigan, six of which are in Huron County.

The State History Award for Books: Children & Youth goes to “Hunter’s Quest: Finding Heritage and Friendship in Southwest Michigan” by author **Mara MacKay** (aka Mara Mae) and illustrator **Dan Smith**. “Hunter’s Quest” is set in Kalamazoo where young Hunter and his family have just moved. The relocation causes a difficult adjustment for Hunter but his wise and caring grandfather finds innovative ways to help smooth the way. The journey eventually leads Hunter through the historic years on Parson Street, and readers have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Gibson guitars, Shakespeare fishing lures, and the generations of talented people who crafted them.

In the category of Communications: Newsletters and Websites, the Society presented a State History Award for the newsletter **The Ford Legend**, produced by the **Henry Ford Heritage Association**, which is dedicated to fostering interest in the life and accomplishments of Henry Ford. This publication has been produced three times a year since 1992, and a new website launched earlier this year complements the newsletter with a vast array of resources available free of charge to audiences worldwide, including a history of Henry Ford and information about Ford car clubs.

This year’s recipient of a State History Award in the Education: Educator category award is someone who exemplifies the very essence of an award-winning teacher: **Kelly Eddy** from **Ann Arbor**. Recognized in the “Who’s Who of American Teachers,” Eddy firmly believes, “The best teachers are always students at heart.” As a result of her personal drive to be the best teacher she can be, her students at **Churchill High School in Livonia** have achieved phenomenal scores on the AP U.S. History and AP European History exams. But it is the obvious and widely recognized passion that Eddy’s students exhibit for historical topics after she has taught them that stands out as testimony to her success as an educator here in the state of Michigan.

In the Local Societies category, the State History Award went to the **Leelanau Historical Society**. With determination, donations and grants, the Leelanau Historical Society continues its mission to inspire people to explore the past,

understand the present and envision the future of the diverse cultures in Michigan's little finger and its five islands. First housed in Leland's original jailhouse, the society moved into a state-of-the-art museum and research center that hosts exhibits and programs throughout the year. Two staff members are augmented by a very active board and a cadre of volunteers. The group participates in the Wood Boat Show on the Leland River and partners with the Leland Township Library to bring lectures and activities to the community.

This year's State History Award in the Special Programs/Events category goes to the **Grosse Pointe Historical Society's** "Legends of the Lake." Using live outdoor theater as a medium to share its history, the Grosse Pointe Historical Society presented three sold-out and standing-room-only performances of "Legends of the Lake." This special program is a personal retelling of the experiences of folks who settled and lived in the Grosse Pointe/St. Clair Shores area from Windmill Pointe to Gaulker Pointe. Growing from a previous but much smaller effort, the production is now a joint effort between the Grosse Pointe Historical Society, the Grosse Pointe Theatre, and the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House.

"A Weed Goes to War," which appeared in the January/February 2014 issue of Michigan History magazine, most captured the attention of the readers and has won the State History Award for Best Article in Michigan History magazine. Written by **Gerald Wykes**, a historian, interpreter and illustrator from **Monroe**, the article explains how the milkweed was once considered a pest by farmers, but then researchers discovered that its fine white floss could be used to enhance buoyancy in life preservers used in World War II. That prompted everyone from the oldest senior to the youngest school child to join together in Michigan and other milkweed-producing states to pick milkweed pods and bag them for transfer to the processing plant in Petoskey. Harvesting milkweed made Americans on the home front feel that they were contributing something important to the war effort.

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Keeping Michigan's history at everyone's fingertips

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**The Historical Society of Michigan is our state's oldest cultural organization, founded in 1828 by territorial governor Lewis Cass and explorer Henry Schoolcraft. A nongovernmental nonprofit, the Society focuses on publications, conferences, education, awards and recognition programming, and support for local history organizations to preserve and promote Michigan's rich history.**

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For more information on the Historical Society of Michigan, please visit [www.hsmichigan.org](http://www.hsmichigan.org) or e-mail us at

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This e-mail is sent to our members and friends to keep you updated on historical activities and opportunities to learn more about our state's history. To opt-out, please respond to this e-mail with "remove" in the subject line.