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Photos Available Upon Request

Annual Meeting Shares Heritage Center Highlights and Salutes Local Historians

Members and friends of the Oberlin Heritage Center gathered at The Hotel at Oberlin on April 4 to celebrate the nonprofit's accomplishments of the past year and to look ahead to the future. An audience of 140 guests enjoyed a performance by Sherrie Tolliver, an actress with the Lakewood nonprofit *Women in History*, who portrayed acclaimed artist Edmonia Lewis. Lewis, a woman of African American and Native American descent, was a mid-19th century Oberlin College student who overcame an unsettling college experience to eventually rise to international prominence as a neoclassical sculptor.

Highlighting the event were remarks by Board President Gail Wood reporting progress on the Heritage Center's campaign to build the Pat Murphy Endowment for Heritage Preservation, a fund named in honor of the former Executive Director who helped lead the organization for 22 years prior to her retirement in 2015. The fund has grown to \$444,000 from 253 donors, within reach of the \$500,000 midpoint goal that the organization hopes to achieve by the end of this year. Income generated from the fund will help support the maintenance and preservation of the Center's historic buildings and museum collection.

Rounding out the evening were the 17th Annual Community Awards presentations for outstanding dedication to history, service, and the Oberlin community. Award recipients included:

Francis M. Stuart, who was recognized with a Community Historian Award for his dedication in assisting others in researching their family genealogy. For the past five years, Stuart has made himself available regularly at the Oberlin Public Library and has volunteered over 700 hours to help those seeking to learn more about their family roots.

Officer Bashshar Wiley, a member of the Oberlin Police Department, who was honored with a Community Historian Award for his work educating the public about local police history. Officer Wiley's research helped uncover the death of a forgotten Oberlin officer, Constable Franklin Stone, who died in the line of duty in 1881. As a result of Wiley's efforts, Stone's name will be added this year to both national and state memorials remembering those who lost their lives in service to their communities.

Adenike Sharpley, who was recognized with the Heritage Guardian Award for years of sharing and celebrating African and African-American history, and in particular for her vision in educating community members about Juneteenth, the day in 1865 when news and enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation finally reached Texas, sparking celebrations

throughout the region. Because of Ms. Sharpley's passion, Oberlin's Juneteenth Festival has become a powerful annual observance in Oberlin.

Carl W. Jacobson, who was hailed as the Heritage Center's Volunteer of the Year for his work as a docent at the Oberlin historic site and for his involvement and leadership in the Oberlin Oral History Project, and

Zaria Amerson, who received the Youth Community Service Award for her enthusiastic involvement with the Heritage Center's summer camp program, first as a long-time participant, and more recently as a caring and helpful camp counselor.

The Heritage Center's annual business meeting took place during the dinner. Governance committee chair Barbara Enos presided over the election of new Trustees, including Kaitlyn Donaldson, Eboni Johnson, Rebecca Lahetta, Laura Slocum, and Annessa Wyman. Claudia Jones was re-elected to a second term on the Board, and Camille Hamlin Allen, Michele Andrews, Richard E. Baznik, Adam Freas, and Rich Fredrickson were appointed Honorary Trustees following completion of two Board terms each. OHC Assistant to the Director Mary Anne Cunningham was recognized for her 25 years of service as a staff member of the organization. For more about the Oberlin Heritage Center, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org.

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