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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 2 to celebrate the nonprofit’s accomplishments of the past year and to look ahead to the future. An audience of 160 guests enjoyed an enlightening talk by historians, educators and authors Carol Lasser and Gary Kornblith, who shared insights from their new book *Elusive Utopia: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Oberlin, Ohio*.

Highlighting the business meeting portion of the evening were remarks by Board President Gail Wood reporting progress on the Heritage Center’s campaign to build the Pat Murphy Endowment for Heritage Preservation. The fund was named in honor of OHC’s former Executive Director who led the organization for 22 years prior to retirement in 2015. Income generated from this fund will help support the maintenance and preservation of the Center’s historic buildings and museum collection. The endowment campaign presently has surpassed its mid-point goal of half a million dollars, with $551,000 received from more than 260 donors. Many are part of a special circle of friends known as Heritage Center Endowed Life Members or “ELMs,” who were recognized at this year’s Annual Meeting with a gift of a handsome gold “Elm Tree” lapel pin in appreciation for their deeply rooted support of the organization.

Governance committee chair Barbara Enos presided over the election of new Trustees, including Carl Jacobson, Julie Min and Nikki Smith-Hignite. Laurel Price Jones and Brittnei Sherrod were re-elected to three-year terms on the Board, while Stephen Johnson III and Edward J. Wardwell were appointed Honorary Trustees following completion of several Board terms each.

Rounding out the evening were the 18th Annual Community Awards presentations for outstanding dedication to history, service, and the Oberlin community. Award recipients included:

**Mike Demchak**, a Social Studies teacher at Christian Community School in North Easton, Ohio, who was recognized with the History Teacher of the Year Award for building the school’s History Day program into a fierce contender in state and national competitions.

**Marty Buck/Techies**, who was honored with the Business Leader Service Award for serving as a one-man IT department for the Oberlin Heritage Center for many years and consistently going above and beyond for the organization.

**The Oberlin Heritage Center’s GPS Westwood Team** (comprised of Rich Fredrickson, Judy Connolly, Camille Hamlin Allen, Amy Chuang, Judy Cook and Adam Freas), hailed as the
Heritage Center’s Volunteers of the Year for their dedication to a multi-year project of logging latitude and longitude coordinates on every gravestone marker in Westwood Cemetery. The information will be added to the Westwood Cemetery database (http://www.oberlinwestwood.org/omeka/) that provides online access to descriptive and location information for every monument, headstone and marker in the cemetery.

Ruby Denneen and John Elrod, both seniors at Oberlin High School and regular volunteers at the Oberlin Heritage Center, each of whom received the Youth Community Service Award for their good work as part of the OHC team behind-the-scenes and as excellent history ambassadors among the youth of the community. Both have assisted with research, program evaluation and publicity tasks at the Heritage Center, while John also has led many tours.

The Heritage Center expressed appreciation to Northwest Bank for being a sponsor of the evening’s activities. For more about the Oberlin Heritage Center, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org.

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