



News Release

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Washington State Historical Society announces annual History Awards honorees

Tacoma, WA — Each year, the Washington State Historical Society (WSHS) recognizes excellence in advancing the field of history in the Evergreen State with seven special awards focused on writing, teaching, historic projects, and understanding cultural diversity. The [History Awards](#) will be presented at the Historical Society's annual meeting—a [ticketed event](#), open to the public. Along with a casual lunch, guests will see a pop-up exhibit about World War I in Washington, hear from speaker [David Jepsen](#) (co-author of [Contested Boundaries: a New Pacific Northwest History](#)), and meet some of the History Awards honorees.

The History Awards and annual meeting will take place at the [Washington State History Museum](#) in Tacoma on Saturday, September 22. Check-in begins at 11:30 AM, and the program ends at 1:30 PM. Contact Development Director Lianna Shepherd at Lianna.Shepherd@wshs.wa.gov or call (253)798-5899 for reservations.

The History Awards celebrate the women and men whose accomplishments, either during the prior year or long term, have promoted state history. This year's honorees are:

Robert Gray Medal: [Jack Nisbet](#), a naturalist, teacher and author, receives this award in recognition of his scholarship and writing about the natural and cultural history of the Pacific Northwest. Nisbet has substantially contributed to our understanding through documentaries, museum exhibits, and publications. A few of his most well-known books are *The Collector: David Douglas and the Natural History of the Northwest*; *Sources of the River: Tracking David Thompson Across Western North America*; and *Visible Bones: Journeys Across Time in the Columbia River Country*.

"Jack deserves this distinguished honor for several reasons. First, he recognizes that natural and cultural history are inextricably entwined, and investigates this complex relationship to present a more holistic view of a given subject. Second, his research gives voice to individuals who would otherwise be nearly silent in the historical record, highlighting the indigenous and mixed-ethnicity peoples who offered knowledge and guidance to early naturalists," said Theresa Langford of the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site/National Park Service. "And third," she added, "he continually and inexhaustibly shares his passion with others through lectures, classes, tours, and workshops."

Peace and Friendship Award: There are two honorees for this award.

[Deva Leinani Aiko Yamashiro](#) is posthumously awarded for her work as the founder and director of The [Ke Kukui Foundation](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining and sharing Hawaiian culture. Under her leadership, Ke Kukui brought thousands of people together to learn about Hawaiian culture through classes, competitions, music and festivals. The annual "Three Days of Aloha" event in Vancouver, Washington, is the largest Hawaiian cultural festival outside the Islands, and in 2017, the

city's mayor proclaimed September 15 (Yamashiro's birthday) as Deva Leinani Aiko Yamashiro Day. The organization has been a force for positive change, and Yamashiro's focus on peace and friendship was evident in her words, as printed in the *Columbia*:

“‘Aloha’ has been repurposed as a simple friendly greeting in recent years, but its original meaning is deeper and subtler: it’s ‘the breath of life,’ ‘love and respect,’ ‘peace,’ ‘compassion’ and ‘mercy.’ It’s a way of life. It’s in your spirit and your being. If the world had more aloha, we wouldn’t have all these problems.”

[Allyson Brooks, Ph.D.](#), also receives the Peace and Friendship Award for her role in returning the [Ancient One](#) (previously known as Kennewick Man) to the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Yakama Nation, and the Wanapum of Priest Rapids. Dr. Brooks is the historic preservation officer and director of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for the State of Washington.

“In the true spirit of the Peace and Friendship Award, Dr. Brooks reached out well beyond the scope of her duties to right a wrong and provide closure to a hot button issue which lasted over 20 years for five of the Plateau tribes and the Native Peoples of Washington, who fought to have the Ancient One returned so he could be reburied as dictated by our culture. When all movement forward ground to a halt, Dr. Brooks approached Senator Patty Murray to craft and forward a bill that would direct the US Army Corps of Engineers to return the remains to the Claimant Tribes. She rallied support on both sides of the aisle. Dr. Brooks was able to communicate to Congress, agencies, and the Corps of Engineers the injustice to not only the Ancient One, but also to the Tribes, that had taken place for over 20 years and provided a solution. She was able to bring together a diverse group of people in order to help craft a bill that was simple and heart-felt. Her passion, conviction, and commitment to this issue exemplify the purpose of the Peace and Friendship award,” said Guy Moura, who is the tribal historic preservation officer of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Governor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching History: [Luke Thomas](#) of Mt. Spokane High School receives this award for his outstanding contributions as a teacher. Thomas has been a true inspiration for students, both those who thought they did not like history and those who wanted to push the envelope in the subject. “Through a lens focused on exploration and the question of ‘why’ something happened, students are able to apply their knowledge in order to gain a complete understanding of historical events ... all of his students leave with a passion for the subject and a heightened world view,” said Mt. Spokane student Caleb Marll. Mt. Spokane’s principal, Darren Nelson, addressed Thomas’s ability to connect students with history by encouraging them to learn and do more. “Outside the classroom, Luke’s work with National History Day has given multiple students the opportunity to delve deeper into historical events or time periods, and their work has been nothing short of spectacular. It is clear through students’ projects that they are learning a great deal about the significant role of the northwest in both U.S. and world events. If not for the leadership of Luke Thomas, these opportunities would not be possible,” said Nelson.

David Douglas Award: [Fort Nisqually Living History Museum](#) received this award in recognition of the organization’s success in engaging new audiences with history. Museum staff created an adventure called “[Trapped: Escape Fort Nisqually](#)”—an escape room experience based on actual events that occurred at the original fort in 1853. As stated in a nomination submitted by Metro Parks: “Understanding that many of us are interactive learners, staff developed a series of clues drawn from documented historic events to develop *Trapped: Escape Fort Nisqually*. This high energy suspense game engages up to eight players in a group endeavor to uncover clues and solve puzzles ... they work to beat the hour glass and locate a key that will enable them to escape from one of the fort’s historic structures within a suspenseful one-hour timeframe. Puzzles are drawn from primary source documents in the museum’s archives.

Participants play by candlelight and are immersed in a 19th century environment.” That sounds like award-winning fun!

John McClelland, Jr. Award for contribution to *COLUMBIA, The Magazine of Northwest History*: [Craig Holstine](#) received this award for his article [Lacey V. Murrow and his Upstanding Bridges](#), published in *COLUMBIA*'s Spring 2017, Vol. 31, No. 1. Holstine recently retired from his role as historian for the Washington State Department of Transportation's Cultural Resources Program. His article overviews the life of Lacey Murrow, highlighting Murrow's history-making work on the spans over Lake Washington and the Tacoma Narrows. The two bridges opened one day apart in July of 1940. Just a few months later, on November 7, 1940, the long-awaited crossing over the Narrows twisted into infamy as Galloping Gertie when oscillation due to high winds caused much of the center span to plummet into Puget Sound. Holstine's compelling article offers readers insight into Murrow's life before, during and after his bridge-building days as Washington Director of Highways. Holstine also co-curated, with Clark McAbee, [Peak of Their Professions: The Murrow Brothers](#), a traveling museum exhibit shown at the State Capital Museum in 2013 and featured on C-SPAN. His book [Spanning Washington: Historic Highway Bridges of the Evergreen State](#) was published in 2005.

Charles Gates Memorial Award for contribution to *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*: [Trevor James Bond](#), Ph.D., received this recognition for his article, [Documenting Missionaries and Indians: The Archive of Myron Eells](#) which appeared in the Summer 2016, Volume 107, No. 3 issue. Bond earned a Master's in Library and Information Science with a specialization in archives and preservation management, along with a Masters in Ancient History at UCLA. He completed his doctorate in public history at Washington State University in 2017, where he is the Associate Dean for Digital Initiatives and Special Collections and co-director of the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation. Bond is currently writing a book chapter on WSU's longest-serving president and noted collector, Ernest O. Holland, and he is revising his dissertation on the Nez Perce Tribe's purchase of the Spalding-Allen Collection for publication.

Lorraine Wojahn Award for outstanding volunteer service advancing the work of the Washington State Historical Society: [Kent Anderson](#) is the recipient of this award for his diligent and valuable volunteer work in organizing records for the [Heritage Capital Project's](#) (HCP) archives. He also developed summaries of each of the projects from the beginning of the program. As a result, the Historical Society can provide quicker responses to the public and to legislators regarding questions about historic buildings and past policy decisions. Anderson is currently working to develop a continuing education program for the museum's gallery volunteers by conducting research, writing about and providing talking points for historical topics. Continuing education is pivotal in enhancing the visitor experience through informed and museum docents. "Kent is easygoing, enthusiastic, and a pleasure to work with. He has dedicated over 175 hours to the Heritage Capital Projects department alone. We are so fortunate to have him on our team. He richly deserves the recognition of the Lorraine Wojahn Volunteer of the Year Award," said Lissa Kramer, program director for Heritage Capital Projects.

Please join your Washington State Historical Society in celebrating these individuals and organizations for their outstanding contributions to the field of history in our state. If you would like to nominate someone for the next annual awards, please see the [History Awards page](#) on the Historical Society's website and complete a nomination form.

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About The Washington State Historical Society

The Washington State Historical Society partners with our communities to explore how history connects us all.

Address: 1911 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98402

Hours: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM Tuesday through Sunday. On the Third Thursday of each month, 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

Admission: [Free for members](#); Adults \$14; seniors (age 65+), students (age 6-17), retired and active duty and military (with ID) \$11; free for children 5 and under; family rate \$40 (up to two adults and four children under age 18). Patrons with a [Washington Quest card](#) or Washington Foster Care license can attend for \$1 per person or \$2 per family. Admission is free for everyone from 3:00 – 8:00 PM on the Third Thursday of each month.

Washington State Historical Society's most visible activity, the Washington State History Museum (WSHM) is located in Tacoma's downtown core along Pacific Avenue among a thriving cultural scene. The museum features permanent exhibitions, unique rotating exhibitions highlighting the Society's collections, and dynamic traveling exhibitions. WSHM is one of six museums in the Tacoma Museum District.