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Press Release

Michigan Museums Association Awards Museum Workers from across the state at the 2016 MMA Annual Meeting

September 16, Detroit MI: Museum professionals, volunteers, and supporters recently gathered in Detroit, Michigan for the 2016 Annual Michigan Museums Association (MMA) Conference, as well as the MMA Awards. These awards are given annually by the association to acknowledge excellence in several areas and were presented this year on September 16. Three awards were given to individuals in the Michigan museum community. The recipients of this year's awards were:

- Bettina Cousineau, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum – MMA Volunteer Award
- Juanita Moore, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History – President's Award
- Sloan*Longway, Flint Michigan – Peninsulas Prize

It is such an honor to be able to recognize some of the good work and dedicated service in Michigan's museums. Michigan's museums provide jobs and support communities. They educate children and engage families and groups. They preserve and share priceless works of art and historic artifacts, and promote scientific exploration and a better understanding of our shared Michigan culture. The individuals honored by us this year represent the thousands of people in our state who are passionate about their work in museums, and are well deserved. – Lisa Craig Brisson, Executive Director, MMA

Decades of Service

There is one thing in common with the recipients of this year's Michigan Museums Association awards – dedication.

Bettina Cousineau, Exhibit Designer at Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum, was this year's recipient of MMA's Volunteer Award, selected by MMA Executive Director Lisa Craig Brisson.

Bettina has been an active volunteer for MMA for several years. Her efforts have been particularly strong regarding planning of the association's annual conference. Last year she led the communications team and helped map out a permanent communications strategy as well as incorporated social media in the conference experience.

This year Bettina led the engagement team. This team created spaces and experiences that helped MMA stay connected at the conference, which was held jointly with a large national association. Bettina was both innovative and collaborative with each of the teams- no small feat, especially since conference teams are mostly virtual, meeting via conference call and using online project management tools.

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Juanita Moore, President and CEO of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, recipient of this year's President's Award was chosen by MMA President, President Emily Fijol. Moore was not able to attend the awards luncheon due to a family emergency. LaNesha DeBardelaben, Senior Vice President of Education & Exhibitions at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, accepted the award on her behalf.

As President and CEO of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Juanita Moore has brought the museum visionary leadership for the past ten years and brings the institution nearly 40 years of museum experience. Her achievements are numerous. The recession of 2008 - 2011 was a time when many museums around the country scaled back their operations, but Juanita shepherded The Wright Museum through the Detroit Bankruptcy crisis and funding cuts from the city by establishing new partnerships and increasing programming and public outreach.

The Wright now hosts nearly 300 public events annually attracting over 300,000 attendees per year, nearly tripling visitation numbers since her arrival in 2006. Juanita brings her expertise to other community organizations, serving on the Board of the International Council of Museums, Midtown Detroit Inc., CultureSource, and as a member of the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission. She is a visionary thinker, gracious mentor, and role model for many.

Sloan*Longway of Flint, Michigan was the recipient of the 2016 MMA Peninsulas Prize, which was awards by the MMA Board of Directors.

At the crux of the water crisis in Flint, "Water's Extreme Journey" opened at Sloan*Longway. This traveling exhibit was used as a jumping off point to examine the Flint water crisis. With it, dynamic community programming was developed, creating a conversation through scientific inquiry, play, and art. The exhibit was developed to empower visitors to take action, commit to clean water, and express their support for clean water initiatives. Once through the maze of the exhibit, visitors could delve into Flint's water system history, learn the science of filtration, examine current issues and solutions, and investigate the Flint River today.

Earth Day was another opportunity for the Sloan to engage with the community, partnering with the Flint Cultural Center on an Earth Day Celebration. The museum offered hands-on stations throughout the exhibit that encouraged families to interact with each other. These science stations focused on concepts of wetlands, groundwater, water treatment, the water cycle, and habitat. Also during this time, the Longway Planetarium had viewings of the film Mysteries of the Great Lakes. The film showcased the amazing geography, ecology, science, and history of one of the largest freshwater resources in the world and highlighted the need for preservation and conservation.

With an emphasis on face-to-face collaboration, the Michigan Museums Association shares expertise and resources to promote standards and practices that make the Michigan museum community thrive. MMA has been supporting the work of Michigan museums for nearly 60 years. Our members include the institutions, professionals and volunteers of the Michigan museum community who believe that strong museums help us better understand ourselves and our world. Every type of museum is represented and welcomed, including art, history, science, military and maritime, and youth museums, as well as aquariums, zoos, botanical gardens, arboretums, historic sites, and science and technology centers.

The 2017 Michigan Museums Association Conference will be in Lansing, Michigan.

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MMA Volunteer Award

Bettina Cousineau, Exhibit Designer for the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum in Grand Rapids, received the MMA Volunteer Award from Lisa Craig Brisson, Executive Director for the Michigan Museums Association. (Photo by the American Association for State and Local History)



President's Award

LaNesha DeBardelaben, Senior Vice President of Education & Exhibitions at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, accepted the MMA President's Awards from MMA Board of Director's President Emily Fijol, on behalf of Juanita Moore, President and CEO of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. Moore was not able to attend due to a family emergency. (Photo by the American Association for State and Local History)



Peninsulas Prize

Henry Matthews, Director of Galleries and Collections at Grand Valley State University, presented the Peninsulas Prize to Sloan*Longway in Flint. Todd Slisher, Executive Director of the Sloan Museum, accepted the award. (Photo by the American Association for State and Local History)

High resolution photographs are available by emailing lcbrisson@michiganmuseums.org.

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