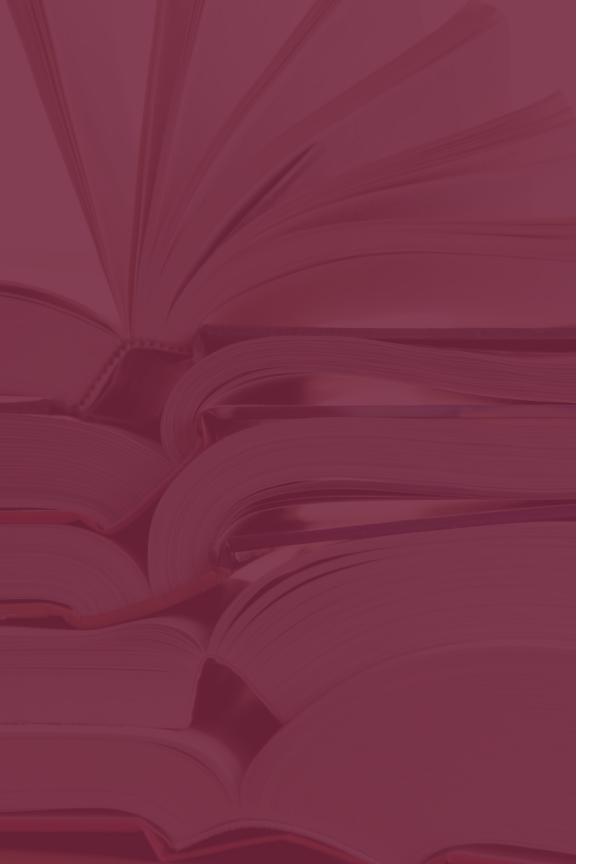


Kevin Cherry A future for our histories

NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY April 24, 2024



Kevin Cherry A future for our histories

April 24, 2024 • The Carolina Inn • Chapel Hill, NC

2024 SOCIETY AWARD with Tributes by Susan Kluttz and Patrick S. Wooten

2023 SOCIETY BOOK AWARD

2024 WILLIAM S. POWELL AWARD

Videos of the celebration in Chapel Hill on April 24, 2024 can be found on the Society's website: www.ncsociety.org.



ABOVE: North Caroliniana Society Award: Society Award honorees' names are engraved on the silver cup, housed in the North Carolina Collection at the Louis Round Wilson Library.

NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY IMPRINTS

Number 65 Lynn Roundtree, Editor

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Introduction

NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY

P. O. Box 20632 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27619 • Telephone: 919.230.1524 www.ncsociety.org

Chartered on 11 September 1975 as a private nonprofit corporation under provisions of Chapter 55A of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the North Caroliniana Society is dedicated to the promotion of increased knowledge and appreciation of North Carolina's heritage through the encouragement of scholarly research and writing in and teaching of state and local history and literature; publication of documentary materials, including the numbered, limitededition *North Caroliniana Society Imprints* (see a list included in this publication) and *North Caroliniana Society Keepsakes*; sponsorship of professional and lay conferences, seminars, lectures, and exhibitions; commemoration of historic events, including sponsorship of markers and plaques; and through assistance to the North Carolina Collection of UNC-Chapel Hill and other cultural organizations with kindred objectives. The Society's motto is "Substance, Not Show."

Founded by H.G. Jones and incorporated by Jones, William S. Powell, and Louis M. Connor Jr., who soon were joined by a distinguished group of North Carolinians, the Society was limited to a hundred members for the first decade. It elects from time to time additional individuals meeting its strict criterion of "adjudged performance" in service to their state's culture — i.e., those who have demonstrated a continuing interest in and support of the historical, literary, and cultural heritage of North Carolina. Presently, the Society has 255 members.

The Society, a tax-exempt organization under provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, expects continued service from its members, and for its programs it depends upon the contributions, bequests, and devises of its members and friends.

In addition to its continued support of the North Carolina Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill, the Society administers a fund, given in 1987 by the Research Triangle Foundation in honor of its retiring board chairman and the Society's longtime president, from which to date more than 400 Archie K. Davis Fellowships have been awarded for research in North Carolina's historical and cultural resources. N.C. History Day and the *North Carolina Historical Review*, both administered through the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, receive continued support from the Society.

In 2016, committed to supporting our state's K-12 teachers, the Society and the Carolina K-12 Fund of Carolina Public Humanities developed the

William Friday Teacher Education Initiative, with the goal of equally educating and appreciating our state's hard working educators through free, high-quality professional development events.

The Society also sponsors the North Caroliniana Book Award, recognizing a book that best captures the essence of North Carolina; the William S. Powell Award to a student who, during the student's career at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has done the most to develop an interest in, and understanding of, the history and traditions of the nation's oldest state university; and the H.G. Jones North Carolina History Prizes for winners in the N.C. History Day competition, an affiliate of the National History Day program.

A highlight of the Society's year is the presentation of the North Caroliniana Society Award to an individual or organization for long and distinguished service in the encouragement, production, enhancement, promotion, and preservation of North Carolina's heritage.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, APRIL 24, 2024

Officers:

- Bland Simpson, President
- Alice R. Cotten, Vice President
- Terry Roberts, Vice President
- Patrick S. Wooten, Secretary-Treasurer
- Directors: Margaret D. Bauer, David S. Cecelski, Kevin Cherry, Tom Earnhardt, Georgann Eubanks, Emily Williamson Gangi, Rebecca Godwin, Anna R. Hayes, Eric L. Johnson, Leslie Dula McKesson, C. Edward Teague III, Thomas E. Terrell Jr., and Mike Wiley
- Directors ex officio: Lloyd Kramer, Director, Carolina Public Humanities; Jason E. Tomberlin, Interim Curator, North Carolina Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill Library; Darin Waters, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Archives and History, N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- *Presidents* emeriti: William S. Powell (1919-2015), Archie K. Davis (1911-1998), William C. Friday (1920-2012), Willis P. Whichard, and James W. Clark Jr.
- Vice President emeritus: H. David Bruton (1934-2023)
- Secretary-Treasurers emeriti: H.G. Jones (1924-2018) and Martin H. Brinkley
- Directors emeriti: Timothy B. Burnett, Jeffrey J. Crow, Dana Borden Lacy, Nancy Cobb Lilly, and Dannye Romine Powell

President's Report: Annual Meeting of the Membership James W. Clark Jr., President

This message is my final one as President of the Society. During the decade of program growth and fiscal development I have spent in this office, I have witnessed an expansion of vision as well as mission in our collaborative work, among ourselves and with other organizations. We also created and followed our first strategic plan and hired and retained an invaluable executive director. Copie Cain has helped make our outreach activities and our stewardship successful and accountable. Our website is now more reflective of our achievements as well.

With your cooperation we have been successful, too, in making committee assignments that assist the Society's executive committee in working with collaborators and our board. Each funded endeavor, the Archie K. Davis Fellowships, the book prize, and the William S. Powell Award, for example, has its own active committee. A budget committee and a grants review committee are in place. Grant cycles have been established and are followed. Guided by the executive committee, William C. Friday Teacher Retreats have become annual events in partnership with Carolina K-12 of Carolina Public Humanities. The North Carolina Division of Archives and History and the North Carolina Collection at Carolina, our oldest beneficiaries, remain in our funding cycle for significant support. The work of the nominating committee, in particular, has allowed the Society to grow its membership while identifying members who will serve in elected positions. All of our record of professional development, recognition, and service will be reflected in the 2023-2024 Annual Report. Work is underway on a new strategic plan for the Society.

Next year will be the fiftieth anniversary of our founding by H. G. Jones. The substance of our natural and cultural heritage and the skills and generosity of our past and present members encourage me to see a bright future for the Society. Increasingly we are experiencing an expanding sense of how important it is for young people to choose courses of study and career paths that qualify them to assume leadership roles in our ongoing, challenging work of teaching, preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the ecology of our total environment. I emphasize this point whenever I speak to teachers, students, and parents at National History

Day or the Friday Retreats. The Society's highest awards will be presented this year to Dr. Kevin Cherry and Dr. Jo Ann Chavis Lowery. We call attention to them as important leaders for whom nature and culture are bonded. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.



Outgoing Society President Jim Clark and Incoming Society President Bland Simpson

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that qualify them to assume leadership roles in our ongoing, challenging work of teaching, preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the ecology of our total environment."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Myers Sugg, Patrick Wooten
Allie Knorr, Gary Freeze • Alice Cotten, Jason Tomberlin • Brian Brigman, Roger Kirkman, Keith Kapp, Joe Seagle Eric Johnson, Emily Williamson Gangi 🔹 Diana and Roy Johnson • Bobby Allen, James E. Williams, Jr. • Anna Hayes, David Routh, Jenny Routh Kevin Cherry | Page 5

Kevin Cherry NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY AWARD 2024



Kevin Cherry

Organizer, promotor, and chief cheerleader of a wide range of North Carolina history projects during the last four decades, Kevin Cherry grew up on a tomato farm in Denver, NC. Kevin's long — extremely long — educational career at UNC-Chapel Hill saw him receive four degrees and, perhaps, also set a record for working in the most UNC libraries and collections than any other student worker/ graduate assistant: nine. While a local history librarian in Rowan County, he pulled together partners to revitalize the state's public library local history collections, becoming a leader in the North Carolina Library Association and a member of the American Library Association Council. It was then that the promise of new technologies called, and despite never really being a techie, he became North Carolina's grassroots promotor of the uses of the Internet by cultural institutions.

Working for the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, he became the state's Johnny Appleseed of "new technologies for old things," speaking at libraries, museums, and historical societies from one end of the state to the other. When not on the road, Kevin led efforts to develop: a grant program to inspire model digital programs; workshops to teach the basics of digitization; and procedures to translate the protocols and technical language of cutting-edge institutions into something more accessible and usable by volunteer-run organizations.

At the the federal government's Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), he managed what was then the largest competitive library grant program in the nation. Its mission was to prepare a new generation of librarians and archivists (and later museum professionals) to preserve the record of human achievement stored in digital form. The capstone of these efforts was the creation, with the Library of Congress, of the National Digital Stewardship Residency Program, many of whose graduates have gone on to become leaders in digital preservation around the country.

Kevin returned to North Carolina to become the Deputy Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. He crafted a near-constant set of "joint programs" designed to allow each museum or site in the department to contribute a small amount to reduce the overall burden while getting the "biggest bang" for everyone. The most successful of these programs demonstrated the feasibility of a small boat cruise for the tourist industry in the Albemarle region, which is now coming to fruition.

Wishing to tell a more inclusive North Carolina story, Dr. Cherry increased African American and Native American programming across the board and advocated for adding a prominent civil rights leader's home to State Historic Sites. He also pushed for a Revolutionary War-era "Race to the Dan" historical park and the creation of the Thomas Day State Historic Site to interpret the complicated story of the state's most celebrated free man of color. He also started the efforts to preserve Edenton's Hayes, a state treasure. All are now taking place.

Remembering his own fourth- and eighth-grade North Carolina history years and lamenting the loss of good state history resources for schoolchildren, Dr. Cherry led the department's Historical Publications unit in beginning a children's nonfiction series on North Carolina topics. Kevin then joined the State Library in further developing a project from earlier in his career, an online North Carolina history textbook, NC ANCHOR. While deputy secretary, the annual "History Day Competition" became his own personal holiday. And the favorite thing for this former "Tar Heel Junior Historian" to do was lead the recitation of the State Toast at the Tar Heel Junior Historians' annual state convention.

Kevin now works for the Classical American Homes Preservation Trust of the Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation, where he has focused his energies on crafting a grant and education program to develop the next generation of leaders in Historic Preservation, Collection Management, and Historic Trades.

ABOUT THE AWARD

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The Future of Our Histories Kevin Cherry

AFTERNOON SESSION IN CHAPEL HILL, NC

Former Archivist of the United States Ferriero; Justice Whichard; Representative Longest; Former Secretaries Hamilton and Kluttz; Former Deputy Secretary Crow; Commissioner Goodwin; Former State Archivist Lankford; Former State Librarians Owens and Boone Bernsen; Former Director of State History Museums Howard; Former Director of State Parks and Recreation Murphy; Former State Health Director Devlin; Members of the North Carolina Historical Commission; Distinguished Professors, family, friends and neighbors; Fellow Tar Heels...

Thank y'all for being here.

Scientists tell us that our world is made up of atoms — protons, electrons, neutrons. Well... we all know that the world is actually made up of stories: the "whos," "whens," "whats," and "wheres" leading up to those all-important "whys."

We know what we know because our stories tell us what we know.

I, like most of you, have had the great good fortune of growing up in a storytelling family surrounded by a community of storytellers. I remember my great grandfather's brother, my Uncle Horace, sitting in his chair on the corner of our front porch, wearing his overalls with its black shoestring holding a pocket watch to his bib, one lanky leg thrown over the other and dangling a brogan. "Over yonder, 'cross that field, right around that wet spot in the gully, is where we cut the timber for this house. Used a tractor to run a cross-cut saw. We cut stove wood with that same saw. Chopped Ralph Kelly's finger plumb off. The board bucked and there it went." And a stream of tobacco juice would hit the nandinas. "Buried it in a Mason jar in the back yard." I nearly dug up our entire yard that summer.

On top of coming from a storytelling culture, I have been blessed to do a special kind of storytelling for both a vocation and a hobby. Don't ask me where the one ends and the other begins. I have no idea and have never known. I do know that History is a storytelling business.

On top of coming from a storytelling culture, I have been blessed to do a special kind of storytelling for both a vocation and a hobby. Don't ask me where the one ends and the other begins. I have no idea and have never known. I

do know that History is a storytelling business. And, it's not just any storytelling business. History's stories are based upon evidence: traces, signs, hints, clues, signals of "who" and "when" and "what" and "where," in search of the always debatable and usually mutable "why." Histories are not the past. The past is what happened. The discipline of History is the selection and arrangement of the evidence that remains from the past in an attempt to provide meaning for the present.

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Creating our histories has never been an easy task. The future of our histories certainly faces challenges.

First of all, we live in an increasingly inauthentic world with our unreal "real TV" housewives and their equally faux house-hunting counterparts (who almost always pick that third house to buy). Vote them all off the island! Does anyone remember the video of Hitler dancing a jig at the capitulation of France? That was actually a manipulated copy of a film clip of that madman raising his jodhpured leg and putting it back down again. It was difficult to make that piece of fakery for a good cause at the time (by the Canadian Information Services by the way), and it wasn't very convincing. But now, we have artificial intelligence giving us a very good rendition of Johnny Cash singing a Barbie song. It is convincing, especially for all of us who would like Barbie to be placed a little farther down the line than Folsom Prison. But what does this inauthentic, pink-hued song by the Man in Black have to do with our future histories? How will future historians know that a film, a recording, an electronic document — that piece of evidence required for real history — will be, like that taste *not* born in the Carolinas, "the real thing?" Now, *there* is something to work on.

At this point, I should make a few suggestions for first steps along the lines of identifying the faux digital constructions, but I take after my Papaw McCall, and when it comes to technical matters, if it can't be fixed with baling twine or duct tape, somebody else is gonna have to do it.

Before we work on this important, non-baling-twine-fixable issue, we first have to make certain that our evidence survives. (That's the second thing.) There was once a time when humans carved lines in grand buildings and when those great edifices fell, their shards gave hints of the civilizations that crafted them. There was once a time when ancient religious sects recorded their beliefs on animal skins, rolled them tightly, placed them in clay jugs, and buried them in the recesses of dry caves to await unearthing by shepherds two thousand years later. There was once a time when monks copied ancient text after ancient text, passing them down through the generations — and rats and silverfish and floods and fire and invading armies did their work — and an astonishing amount of this material survived. There

was once a time when people kept diaries, wrote letters, scribbled out receipt books, and took photographs that actually appeared in physical form, and they put them in shoeboxes and the shoeboxes in attics and in those cloistered-eave spaces, these scraps of lives-lived rested and aged and were protected through benign neglect and the inherent properties of their storage media.

There once was a time when every crossroads community had a local newspaper which recorded obituaries and recipes, the times of church services, the scores of athletic events, the results of local elections, and the activities of clubs and schools — along with whatever misbehavior could be found; and libraries bound them, microfilmed them, and later scanned them.

There once was a time when every crossroads community had a local newspaper which recorded obituaries and recipes, the times of church services, the scores of athletic events, the results of local elections, and the activities of clubs and schools — along with whatever misbehavior could be found; and libraries bound them, microfilmed them, and later scanned them. (And I might add it was North Carolinians who led these efforts at preservation through microfilming the nation's records, and North Carolina institutions that forged the way in establishing digitization programs that led to mass scanning at the national level.) We won't have such a rich vein of newsprint to mine in the future. In the mid-20th century, it is estimated that there were about 24,000 newspapers in this country. In 2005, there were about 9,000. Today, there are about 6,000 and most of them carry the same set of stories with very little in-depth, local information. Oh, and a little over two of them, on average, shut down each week. As someone who uses Newspapers.com on a regular basis, I think I can say that this trend is going to change how we do history in the future.

In the past, documentation and preservation happened in a willy-nilly way, but one which somehow worked. But not completely. There was this fellow by the name of Papias. He was an early Christian bishop, born about 40 years after Jesus Christ's death. He gathered stories of the first Christian believers and commentaries on Christ's words — probably before some of the Gospels were actually written down — in five volumes. Five volumes. We have a few quotations from this work found in a few later books, but every copy of those five volumes is now gone. Every copy. They were deaccessioned by some well-meaning librarian making space for more popular items probably, and no one checked a union catalog as part of a last copy policy — which we still don't have. Things like that drive me crazy. Or, how about the once highly influential American work on eugenics that influenced Nazi policy and was once held by libraries all over the world? Almost every library subsequently pulled it. Harvard Special Collections can't find its copy. It was thought to be lost. Finally, the German printing plates were found in a publisher's warehouse, having somehow surviving an Allied bombing during World War II. And, by that tiny biblio-miracle, but barely, we still have a work that helped inspire a horror — and one worth remembering. And I can't even think of the loss of the ancient library at Alexandria, or what has been destroyed in just the last few decades in the Middle East, and what was lost in the Balkan wars of a few years ago (when cultural repositories were especially targeted) or what is now being lost daily in Ukraine. Yes, documentation and preservation happened in the past, but maybe not as successfully as it could have been.

Institutions, today — governments, universities, hospitals, and banks — have individuals dedicated to saving those records that we believe we might actually need again someday. In some cases that even includes emails of decision makers. (Another system that North Carolinians can claim a hand in helping develop.) But the more important stories of who we are, and who we have been, it could be argued, lie in those unofficial records that once resided in our attics. Not anymore. Who believes that all of those pictures on your iPhones and stored on your external hard drives or even in the "cloud" floating way off in the ether of a well-connected metal building in the middle of nowhere, will exist 25 years after you have shuffled off this mortal coil? Who believes that your email will be tied up in the electronic equivalent of a ribbon and cherished by the grandchild of a recipient some decades after the send button was mashed? Most of us create more records in a day than our ancestors did in years, and we then commit them to the wind.

If we are to preserve a future for our histories, we can't be passive. We can't wait on benign neglect to bring us in willy-nilly fashion the drips and drabs of history on long-lost floppy disks. Those things disappear faster than ham biscuits after a funeral. They are ephemeral. Oh, and no one uses them anymore anyway. We must actively intervene in the record-making process and document, document, document.

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For us, an answer might mean teaching individuals and small institutions how to preserve their own electronic records *and* providing them with the *centralized* tools and systems to *easily* do so. It might also mean the creation of documentation

teams as a part of cultural enterprises: oral historians, documentary videographers, active documentarian collectors of stuff. It could be a new role for libraries, especially — community documentation. The State Archives has two oral historians and several universities in the state have a few professors and students involved in this kind of work on the side. (It's the 50th anniversary of the Southern Oral History Program here in Chapel Hill, by the way.) Another example: the State Historic Preservation Office here in North Carolina documents historic structures — but nowhere near the number it once did, and there are a number of counties that have not had their historic structures re-surveyed in more than fifty years, and we still have two counties that have never been surveyed, not even the first time. Y'all, buildings still get old and still become architecturally and historically significant. The built infrastructure of our world not only provides compelling settings for our stories, but they also contain the stories, themselves, within their very timbers. These are just suggestions for a few first steps in the records-making process...

But before we work on helping authentic evidence survive, we have to consider whose stories are being preserved and passed on. For too long, we have primarily collected the stories of the elite and the powerful: the people who knew that they were important, so they made certain to create their own historical evidence and pass it on. Their records should still be collected. But the rest of us deserve to have our stories preserved, too. Studies show that people stand in the kitchens of house museums and talk about what they see there longer than they do in the fancy parlors, offices, and libraries. All of us want to know more about the folks that made those places run, not just the stories of the people who ran those places.

But before we work on helping authentic evidence survive (and this is number three), we have to consider *whose* stories are being preserved and passed on. For too long, we have primarily collected the stories of the elite and the powerful: the people who knew that they were important, so they made certain to create their own historical evidence and pass it on. Their records should still be collected. (After all, they do still run things for the most part.) But the rest of us deserve to have our stories preserved, too. Studies show that people stand in the kitchens of house museums and talk about what they see there longer than they do in the fancy parlors, offices, and libraries. All of us want to know more about the folks that made those places run, not just the stories of the people who ran those places.

For the last decade at least, we cultural stewards have been emphasizing the collection of materials from African Americans and other minorities and — with the preservation of Golden Frinks' home in Edenton and the creation of the Thomas Day State Historic Site in Milton, and Freedom Park in Raleigh, as well as increased exhibitions, programming and collecting across the board — we have had some

successes, but there is much left to be done. The Charlotte Hawkins Brown State Historic Site with its large buildings has opportunities all over the place, and the International Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro—the Woolworth's lunch counter place — is the site of one of our best nationally-known contributions to 20th century American history. It is a fine establishment but one that could certainly be amplified. And where is our Native American Cultural Center for the Staterecognized tribes? And who is documenting the stories of our new immigrants? Something tells me that their Tar Heel descendants will someday want to know the stories of their ancestors' struggles and achievements.

This is laudable work needing to be accomplished, but not all diversity is racial and ethnic. Sometimes it is about the subject matter itself. We have no historic site or museum that collects, preserves, and presents on a *statewide* basis the industry that made modern North Carolina: textiles. There are opportunities in Franklinville and in Cedar Falls, the site of NC's nascent state textile museum. I may be prejudiced about this. My grandmother tied the same knot for nearly fifty years in a mill, and my grandfather spent his life among the looms, and I want their story and those of their cousins/co-workers given the prominence it deserves. It is not too bold a statement to say that the taxes paid by the textile mills built our roads, *and* the Research Triangle (along with our much-lauded university and community college systems) *and* they flat-out made most of the philanthropic families who continue to provide the funding for so many of this state's important undertakings. More than a few quality-of-life features that we now enjoy rest upon a foundation of lint.

Another subject matter example: no one will argue that the impact of the environment upon us and our impact upon it, and the changes in that interaction over time is not worth studying and sharing. Up until fairly recently, environmental history has provided a backdrop to our other histories... but now, it is stepping right up to the front of the stage. We might just have a way before us to present this history.

Another subject matter example: no one will argue that the impact of the environment upon us and our impact upon it, and the changes in that interaction over time is not worth studying and sharing. Up until fairly recently, environmental history has provided a backdrop to our other histories (and markers for our eras — "Before Hugo," "After Hazel"), but now, it is stepping right up to the front of the stage. We might just have a way before us to present this history. Our state parks system maintains Rock Cliff Farm — the home of B.W. Wells, one of North Carolina's most significant environmentalists — located just north of Raleigh within the Falls Lake State Recreation Area. It's a pretty good place to begin an environmental history center, telling the story of North Carolina's environmental leaders, the interaction of humans with their ecosystems, and the environmental

c o n t i n u e d

justice movement (which began in this nation in our own Warren County). Our environmental story is, if you ask me, like our sea levels — rising — and it is a subject area that we dare not ignore in the stories that we tell to understand ourselves. And those are just two big examples of subject area diversity waiting to be better told.

Then there is the matter of geographic diversity. Believe it or not, not everything of significance in this state happens between Burlington and Wendell, Wake Forest and Fuquay-Varina. Maybe it is time to think again about a flagship maritime museum, a branch of the museum of history for our mountains, and an affiliate of some kind near our population centers around Charlotte, all sharing exhibits and programming to make the most of their resources.

Then there is the matter of geographic diversity. Believe it or not, not everything of significance in this state happens between Burlington and Wendell, Wake Forest and Fuquay-Varina. Maybe it is time to think again about a flagship maritime museum, a branch of the museum of history for our mountains, and an affiliate of some kind near our population centers around Charlotte, all sharing exhibits and programming to make the most of their resources. We have made great strides in our historical diversification these last few years, and it is tempting to be like the little boy in the back yard who threw a baseball in the air, swung his bat, and missed. He did it again with the same result. And one more time, the same result, but this time he shouted, "What a pitcher!" We can look at what we have done and congratulate ourselves on our pitching, or we can start some batting practice. Now is no time to let up.

And now, number four. Before we can collect this more diverse, authentic evidence, we have to better equip ourselves for the important work of collecting, preserving, and providing access. I don't know if y'all know this or not, but collecting, storing, and presenting the evidence of the past is *not* a cheap enterprise. It takes people who need to be paid and space that needs to be kept safe, secure, and temperature-controlled and, because history is a growing industry, the need for space and sometimes even people expands from time to time — even when you are storing bits and bytes. I also don't know if y'all know this or not, but funding for the cultural enterprise has not really kept up with inflation these last few decades, and it is a testament to the energy, hard work, and creativity — sheer passion in most instances — of my colleagues in libraries, archives, museums, and historic sites that they are able to craft the amount of bricks that they do with the amount of straw that they have been given. But even passionate commitment can only go so far. And so the stewardship challenge that these memory workers face is, in the words of the immortal Barney Fife, "Big, Real big. Big. Big."

As support for the nation's libraries, archives, museums, and historic sites has

been seriously reduced over the last few decades — and not just in North Carolina and in the United States — pressure on these institutions has led them to make very difficult decisions regarding what to collect — not nearly as much as before — and to even consider deaccessioning artifacts and selling historic structures because, let's face it, old buildings can be expensive, and new buildings cost less to maintain — that is until they fall apart sometime right after their builders die or go out of business. Guess what? There are more people now, doing more and different things, and not all plowing the same furrow in the same red clay just in the next county over. This means that there are all sorts of different stories needing to be captured. Can we save everything? To quote Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene III, Line 87: "No." I am not advocating saving everything, although you wouldn't know it if you waded through my own house. Yes, the historical enterprise, even when highly curated, is expensive. But I contend that it is even more expensive to forget.

"H.M." was an epilepsy patient at MIT who volunteered for experimental surgery, which left him with the inability to form long-term memories. He had normal intelligence. He was kind and congenial, but he had no way to function because he lacked understanding, and he had no understanding because he had no memory. H.M. died in 2009 at the age of 82, and his life contributed significantly to the understanding of epilepsy — but only because the people who worked with him *could* form memories. We can not afford to become a civilization that can't store the memories that make up our histories. We have to invest more in our past to have a more understandable future.

This is not a Houdini and trapdoor situation. It is not just a stage we are passing through. We have to prepare for the long run. That means we can't continue to collect, preserve, and make accessible the mnemonics of our past in the same ways that we always have. We must create new strategies around who collects what and what do we share, and ask ourselves, "Does every county history museum need a copy of the same rusty plow?"

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Page 14 | Kevin Cherry

of campus or only a hundred yards away from a government office, but it is even better to be able to take care of what needs to be preserved and wouldn't be kept because there is no space within walking distance of the exhibit case.

Another answer might be county-level stewards. Way back in the 1970s, there was an attempt to install "county historians" in every county. That was a pretty good idea. A few counties still have them, mainly as employees of public libraries, but most of those few that do still exist aren't given the resources required to collect, preserve, and make accessible *original* information about their areas. A refocusing of their efforts, a ramping up of their resources, and an expansion of their number would help take up the slack for what the Dukes, Chapel Hills, Wake Forests, App States, WCUs, ECUs, UNC-Gs, and NC States among us just can't do — including that active documentation I mentioned earlier. No need to pursue this line of *equine necro-flagellation* further. Simply put, to have authentic, representative evidence and make sure that it survives, cultural institutions have to be bold and stretch and change while building new support — and, like some of the best things in libraries, it is overdue. Now, *there* is yet another thing to work on.

Before we get this new support for the future of our authentic, diverse histories — and this is the last one — we have to know *why* all of this effort and expense is worth it. We all have to answer this question for ourselves. Some say it is to teach ourselves civics. Who can argue against civics lessons these days? And there is that old saw about those who don't know history... yada yada... and history repeating itself... . And Twain's line that "history doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme..." I believe one-liners such as these should be rejoined: human experience is too complex for all that mess. Still, we can find historical parables, if we look. We can find models of behavior and certainly misbehavior in the past. And, if we twist about, hold our heads right, salt the footnotes, and select just the right quotations, we can find a lesson or two. Now, all we have to do is learn from those lessons.

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For me, I side with the writer Wendell Berry. (And those who have worked with me for any time at all will have heard me quote this before, and maybe will even have read this on that sign above my desk.) Berry reminds us that "when a community loses its memory, its members no longer know each other. How can they know each other, if they have forgotten or never learned each other's stories?

If they do not know each other's stories, how can they know whether or not to trust each other? People who do not trust each other do not help each other, and moreover, they fear each other." Knowing my history, and knowing your history, and knowing our shared histories is about building community. Preserving our histories is the foundation for mutual understanding and stronger community. That's what I think. And I think we all just might agree that we can use a bit more community in our world. After all, if you want to change how people act, you have to change how they think, and to change how they think, you have to change how they feel. Our best historic sites, museum exhibitions, immersive programming, and even a bit of pomp and ceremony on occasion goes a long way toward making us feel and then think, and maybe — sometimes — act differently.

I could go on and on, and I had hoped to: mention the need to expand the automotive exhibits and address air travel at the North Carolina Transportation Museum; and the promise of an expanded and renovated main history museum in Raleigh; and the need for more emphasis on our Revolutionary and World War II histories (the 250th anniversary of the United States is upon us in 2026); and the expansion of our online North Carolina history textbook, NC Anchor, which can be so much more than a textbook; and a possible expanded role for the historic sites located in our state parks system; and the importance of National History Day for schoolchildren; and the glories of the North Carolina Historical Review; and the promise of outdoor educational play spaces, as well as indoor visible storage facilities; and the more multidisciplinary approach to historic sites being explored at Hayes Farm in Chowan County; and the potential new gallery and natural history spaces at Tryon Palace in Edenton; and the need to protect historic sites' viewscapes through increased buffer land; and what the popularity of NC's highway historical marker program tells us about taking history directly to the people; and the need for a new generation of historic carpenters, masons, and plasterers (did you know that that the last time that I checked, there was only one historic plasterer left in North Carolina?) I meant to talk about all of that.

And, is "all of that" and the rest just pie in the sky? Well, I have found that the best tasting pie tends to reside way up there, so let's start piling up a mound to stand on, building a ladder, standing on our tiptoes, and stretching. We might not get the *whole* pie, but we might be able to reach a slice or two of some of that sweet stuff while someone else is rounding up an even higher mound and building an even longer ladder.

If I went on much longer, you would see that there is no talent to my end. Shoot, if I went on much longer, I would be tempted to tell you how many kegs of nails went into my homeplace according to Uncle Horace, and what my greatgreat grandfather's favorite dog's name was (Chief), but I better stop here. Just as very few undertakings, if worthwhile, are ever successfully addressed by one person or even a handful of people, no worthy project is ever truly, totally finished. I never did find Cousin Ralph's finger, after all. (First cousin, two times and a digit removed.)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Eric Johnson, Rob Clay Joe Beatty, Will Hamilton George and Blair Jackson, Ann and Bland Simpson Hugh Stevens, Jessica Aylor Eric Johnson, Patrick Wooten, Tim Longest James E. Williams Jr., Keith Kapp, David Winslow Wayne Goodwin, Richard Stevens Joe Mobley, Kay Wyche, Jo Ann Williford

In Tribute to Kevin Cherry

Remarks by Susan Kluttz

EVENING SESSION IN CHAPEL HILL, NC



Susan Kluttz

Io say that I am thrilled about tonight would be an understatement! There is no one I know that should be recognized for his contributions to North Carolina and its history more than Kevin Cherry. And I would know. We worked closely together for four full years. His knowledge, combined with his humor, his disposition, and his love of people made working with him a joy. I even experienced how he filled his spare time with volunteer work at many of our historic sites, including dressing up and serving as a conductor on the "Polar Express" at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. I came to Raleigh in 2012 with no experience in state government, other than my trips to Raleigh to lobby for my city when I served as Mayor of Salisbury. But one experience that I had in Salisbury was to meet Kevin when he worked there several years earlier as the Local History Librarian, and to learn about his excellent reputation and the tremendous respect that people there had for him. I knew that he was someone I could trust.

I had a unique perspective when I was appointed Secretary of Cultural Resources by Governor Pat McCrory. My unique perspective that I was the only Democrat in his cabinet. I had served for fourteen years in a nonpartisan office, and had worked with the future governor on the nonpartisan NC Metropolitan Mayors Coalition when he served as Mayor of Charlotte. I believed in bipartisanship, and I believed that Cultural Resources was very important for the state. So, as I put my management team together, I looked for the very best professionals to do those jobs. Professionalism was more important than politics to me. I did have an amazing number of applicants. A website called "Work for Pat.com" had collected 8,000 résumés from around the state. And I was able in the several weeks before I was sworn in to put together an outstanding team to join the many exceptional professionals already working in the department. They included Karin Cochran, a professor at the Kenan-Flagler Business School in Chapel Hill, and Cary Cox of Cox Marketing Group in Charlotte, among others. But I never considered replacing Kevin, who had served in the previous administration as Deputy Secretary for History and Archives. It was obvious from our first conversation that there was no better person for the job. Having an excellent team was important, especially at that critical time in state government, and particularly for Cultural Resources — probably the most critical time in its history, as I was about to learn.

When I arrived at the end of 2012, following an economic recession, my hometown newspaper described my appointment as one to "a critically underfunded department." That was another understatement! The Department had been warned right before I arrived that if its three largest historic sites — Tryon Palace, the NC Transportation Museum, and Roanoke Island Festival Park — did not produce sufficient revenue in the next year, they might close. Kevin agreed, in addition to his duties supervising history, archives and, for a while, libraries, to serve as Interim Director of all three. He never refused to take on more work.

We also realized that because of inadequate funding, there was no way that the Department could operate as it had without making serious cuts. Our funding was so low that the only way to survive was to temporarily close four state historic sites and one history museum. Kevin was devastated. No one loved these properties more than he. But we had no choice.

And it got worse. This was only the first month. I had been shocked when told by a leader in the North Carolina Senate that he planned to "shut down the Department." It was his opinion that the state's government should not fund Cultural Resources. No matter how alarmed I became, Kevin remained a rock. He calmly faced all challenges and continued to be tremendously supportive of his staff, the entire Department, and of me. His work and devotion to the Department never wavered.

No matter how alarmed I became, Kevin remained a rock. He calmly faced all challenges and continued to be tremendously supportive of his staff, the entire Department, and of me. His work and devotion to the Department never wavered.

Kevin took the news relatively well when I explained that our management team would be traveling to the four historic sites and the one history museum to break the news of the temporary closings in person. Someone on the staff said to me, "We don't do that in state government." But we were going to do it. We had no choice. The staff and volunteers needed to hear this and to hear it from us, along with the simple fact that there was just not enough money.

As we drove up to our first site, the President James K. Polk Historic Site near Charlotte, in our white van with dark, tinted windows, we were surprised to see the sidewalks lined with protesters, holding up signs saying "Don't Close Our Site!" with their angry-looking faces and wondering who these bad people were coming to shut down their beloved site. And, I forgot to say, the protesters were third graders! I knew that it must be heartbreaking for Kevin. It was for me. We were greeted similarly at the Governor Zebulon B. Vance Birthplace near Asheville. This time the protesters lining the road to the site were Tar Heel Junior Historians. This had to be particularly difficult for Kevin, who had worked with this group for years. He told me later that it was actually his proudest moment, seeing these young people so passionate about history. Our tour continued next to the Governor Charles B. Aycock Birthplace near Wilson, where once again we encountered demonstrators. This time they were not students, but senior citizens — and led by Betty Ray McCain, the former Secretary of Cultural Resources! We finished our trips with visits to the House in the Horseshoe historic site in Sanford and the Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort. The publicity that these trips produced and visits to the General Assembly by the Tar Heel Junior Historians (on their first lobbying visits), as well as the many letters the legislators received from children and adults had a surprising and unexpected result. The General Assembly found the money, no site closed, and no mention of closing any part of our department was made again for the rest of our term.

But our crisis didn't end. The second year we watched helplessly as the State Historic Tax Credits reached their sunset date at the end of 2014 and expired. We were unable to convince the General Assembly to extend them.

We had learned much, though, from our historic sites visits. If the legislators would not listen to us, maybe they would listen to their constituents. With the

blessing of Governor McCrory, who himself had been a mayor and knew their importance, and the assistance of the Metro Mayors Coalition, the North Carolina League of Municipalities, Preservation NC, and other advocacy groups, we began a community rally tour at the beginning of 2015. The plan was to ask the mayor of each city or town to identify their most important historic preservation project, as well as their historic building in need of restoration that had the most potential for making a cultural impact. Then we would gather everyone there who was supportive and create an event to educate the public. Kevin was extremely helpful in this planning, as he knew many people in these cities and towns — who was related to whom, who didn't speak to whom, and even information about the individual sites. Our tour continued for ten months and included fifty-two cities and towns across the state. Even though the House of Representatives voted for the credits to return in April, the Senate continued to refuse to hear them. But finally in October, during budget negotiations, the historic tax credits passed and returned, with Governor McCrory signing the bill. Today, I am happy to say that they continue, and that the sunset provision was removed from the legislation.

Throughout our four years working together, Kevin always expressed concern over a part of North Carolina's history that had not been adequately told. It was the African American story. He worked with his staff on two separate projects. One was to create a monument to be placed on the State Capitol grounds, recognizing contributions by African Americans to North Carolina.

Throughout our four years working together, Kevin always expressed concern over a part of North Carolina's history that had not been adequately told. It was the African American story. He worked with his staff on two separate projects. One was to create a monument to be placed on the State Capitol grounds, recognizing contributions by African Americans to North Carolina. We traveled to seven different locations to hold public hearings, and heard fourteen hours of comments about what and who should be included. Sadly, the project never came to fruition. Several years later, other monuments at the Capitol came down, were removed, and no others went up. But, the second project, to turn the property behind the Cultural Resources building into the North Carolina Freedom Park, was successful. Kevin worked hard to make sure that the land set aside for the proposed project would not be turned into other projects, allowing the chief sponsors of this monument more time to raise funds. Today this glorious park honors and celebrates African Americans and their struggles for freedom.

Kevin enjoyed his work and loved nothing more than a celebration. If you had something to celebrate, Kevin was your man! One year at the last moment, Governor McCrory decided he would like to hold a Fourth of July celebration at the Capitol. Kevin was excited to put it together and it would be grand. There was one part of the agenda that I questioned. He wanted one of the speakers to be

my five-year-old grandson William. I wasn't sure that a young child should be part of this distinguished ceremony including the Governor, but Kevin insisted. Little William was dressed in a sport coat and bow tie, looking like a miniature Kevin, standing between Kevin and me on the Capitol steps with a large American flag draped behind us. After Kevin gave a flowery introduction of William (including his recent graduation from kindergarten and where he would be entering the first grade), the little child, who was to lead the Pledge of Allegiance, turned to me and whispered, "Bubbles (my grandmother name), I can't remember it." I, of course, panicked. Kevin, of course, calmly whispered to William, "Just turn around with your back to the audience, face the flag, and I will help you." That was Kevin always calm in a crisis and always able to find a solution.

Our fourth and final year together came with another challenge. The year before, the Program Evaluation Team of the General Assembly, with the Governor in agreement, had determined that Natural Resources should be transferred out of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and into our department. This was not an easy task and had required a significant amount of time and work. The merger was successful, and we became the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Kevin had a great idea, of course, of how to celebrate and welcome the new addition of the State Parks, the North Carolina Zoological Park , the State Aquariums, Land and Water Stewardship, and the State's science museums to our department. We would divide the state into regions and have a party for employees of both cultural resources and natural resources in each region, introducing the staff members in each to one other. We had to travel in a largersize SUV to accommodate the giant cakes! "You can't have too much cake!," said Kevin. Nothing was more welcoming than a celebration organized by Kevin.

Adding natural resources to cultural resources (which we thought was a wonderful area, since both were "treasures" of the State) more than doubled the size of our department. Kevin, who never refused to take on more responsibilities, agreed, in addition to his supervision of history, libraries, and archives, to add the supervision of the thirty-five state parks to his duties. As with all of Kevin's work, he never complained, did an outstanding job, and became a champion for our parks. (Although, I think the state park rangers didn't know what to make of his lastminute pronouncement that we were laying a wreath on Elisha Mitchell's grave, as a part of the 100th celebration of Mount Mitchell State Park. Of course, it turned out to be a highlight of the event, with descendants of Professor Mitchell, the park rangers, and the dignitaries on hand following Kevin's lead.)

I could give you many more examples of what Kevin accomplished during those years. His dedication to Cultural Resources was unwavering and his contributions were immeasurable.

In closing, I **can** tell you that no one has ever loved the State of North Carolina and its people more, or worked harder to make it the very best.

North Carolina is a better place today because of Kevin Cherry.

Remarks by Patrick Wooten

EVENING SESSION IN CHAPEL HILL, NC



Patrick S. Wooten

On the first day of my Drama 16 class at Carolina, which always seemed to have a disproportionate number of oversize football players lining the aisles (due to them not being able to wedge themselves into the petite seating at Old Playmakers), Professor Arthur Housman would begin by asking the class rhetorically, "Where do we begin?" He would then answer, "We begin at the beginning."

Dr. Thomas Kevin B. Cherry (the "B." does not stand for Buster), after having given great attention and deliberation to determining into which suitable Scots-Irish family he would be born, turned his attention to his early pedagogy. Everyone takes it for granted that Kevin, the son of a teacher and a high school principal, excelled through grade school and high school. Apparently even Dr. Cherry does, because that is one of the few things that he never talks about. And as he would say, "And, y'all, that's a might short list."

We know that he grew up on a tomato farm — everyone knows that. But you might not know that Kevin was involved in 4-H, and animal husbandry at that. Some folks involved in those pursuits think it only natural that their calf or cow will go to compete for awards at the State Fair in Raleigh. Kevin's went to the *abattoir*.

What Kevin did excel at was being a Tar Heel Junior Historian. No surprise there. Kevin fell hook, line, and sinker for all the dates, the people, the places, the events, and most of all, the stories. Born with an almost unlimited data reserve for such things, it became second nature to him.

Kevin can walk through an historic site once with a distracted gaze in his eyes and then recall when the place is mentioned in conversation decades later: "Oh, that's the Viking Revival bed and dresser set in the southeast bedroom that the Major bought his wife from Tiffany's. It is made of narwal tusks. But the main attraction in that room is the large power switch behind the door. You know how they made their money, don't you?" There are others here who have those same keen reservoirs of knowledge. Some are professional historians; others share in the general interest. What makes Kevin's path to later life interesting is how it began, in the beginning.

In studying all these places, events, and people, he figured out at some point that he was kin to some of them. We have never been safe since.

Tonight is a little different because we have Kevin's parents, sisters, and cousins actually in the room with him. For many in this room, you are as fictional as Mr. Snuffleupagus was to everyone on Sesame Street. As told by Kevin, even William Faulkner would find some of the stories unimaginable. Stories from camp meeting, choir practice, the tomato fields, football games, baseball games, basketball games (lots and lots of basketball games), motorsports, horses, mules, tractors, gullies, World War II basement showers, tanning beds, Guinea stew — and so on and so forth — have been retold in the halls of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies at Chapel Hill and in the halls of the U. S. Congress. All of them ending in, "And, y'all, that's the truth." They are the foundations of what brings us to this occasion tonight to honor Kevin Cherry.

When Kevin arrived in Chapel Hill for his first degree, he and everyone else knew that it would not be his last. That is because if you are going to be a doctor, you have to go to medical school — hence, at least two degrees were in his future. Kevin was going to be a doctor, period, no doubt about it. He was studying chemistry and was working as a cardiac technician at North Carolina Memorial Hospital — now *there* are some good Kevin stories. But we all did just eat...

Heading to class one day Kevin had a road to Damascus experience — but with just regular sunlight and without the drama of everybody around falling to the ground. Kevin realized that he did not want to be a doctor. Many were dismayed and some disappointed, but in the end it was probably for the best. (You will recall what happened to his 4-H calf.)

No, Kevin was meant to be a thinker. He began to turn to more philosophical pursuits. Eager to share his enlightenment with a group of fellow Di-Phi students, Kevin offered up the imponderable query, "Y'all, why can't everybody just think like me?" The response to this profoundness seems to have turned Kevin to a path of more applied and practical theory.

After his undergraduate studies in chemistry, Kevin obtained a Master's degree in the history of science, and then Master's and PhD degrees in library

and information science. That's four Carolina degrees for those keeping score. (He blames the German language for the lack of a fifth.) Along the way he taught at universities in Maryland and North Carolina. He developed a statewide online system to link the holdings of all the little museums and libraries with the holdings of the big institutions. And this was in the days before you could whip out your smartphone and video conference with your grandchildren on a different continent.

After helping award federal grants — large and small — to museums and libraries across the country, Kevin made it back to North Carolina to help shepherd a group of institutions that had inspired him since childhood. Kevin knew instinctively that he was not the only one who had family stories, not the only one who told those stories, not the only one who ventured out on the weekends to "see what is over there," or decide to stop in a place because "we've driven by here for years and have always wondered what the place was like."

If there is a talent that Kevin has that is not as widely shared in the population, it is that he can look at the biggest pile of broken down, overgrown, vermin infested, out of the way junk or structure and say, "Y'all, we could put a gift shop there." No man has every loved a gift shop more than Kevin. Not that he wants to buy a lot himself, he wants *you* to buy a lot.

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Kevin rarely talks poorly of museums or historic sites that he visits. Sometimes you might get a, "Well, they are doing the best they know how," but rarely ever anything truly harsh. Except when he says, "It's a shame they are not going to make it." When asked why he believes that, he will shake his head and look up slowly saying, "Did you see where they put the gift shop?" With apologies to another Kevin, "Build it, and they shall spend." [By the way, as an aside, did you up front here tonight notice how Kevin's hand just went up a little. He wants to get up and tell you an Archibald "Moonlight" Graham story so bad right now he can hardly stand it.]

Kevin, however, knows that before you send them out through the gift shop you have to send them away not only happy, but wanting to come back and bring their friends and family. "Did you have a good time?" "What was your favorite thing today?" "Have you been here before?" "How did you hear about this place?" While visiting any historic site or checking in with an organization that he's involved in, Kevin is a walking Gallup Poll of what is working and what needs to be improved. Kevin sees room for improvement everywhere. "Y'all, if we just widened that building over there by about ten feet we could cut four doors in the side of it that open out onto this parking lot, and rent it out for weddings when we aren't using it for workshops, demonstrations, or seminars. Just think how many more school kids we could fit in there out of the rain. It won't cost much...."

But it always does cost. And, Kevin knows it. If you want to get money out of someone for a project, what do you do? Make it personal. If your family has ever so much as ridden by the place going to the beach on vacation, Kevin will find out about it and remind you of it. And if your grandparents worked for or belonged to the organization, you might as well just get your checkbook out, or put your lobbying tie on.

When potential donors do come to an event to see what glories will be wrought through their benevolence and generosity, they are not going to get a few faded or dog-eared copies of a brochure. Out come the artifacts, out come the white gloves, out comes the barbecue. Whether it was bringing in to historic sites Golden Frinks' Edenton home; waving about Fort Dobbs with his hands in the air to show folks how big and grand it was going to be (and has become); cajoling Bland Simpson and Tom Earnhardt to launch a demonstration boat cruise to show that ecotourism on the Albemarle Sound was not only commercially viable but also lots of fun; adding land to protect the viewscapes at Bennett Place, Fort Dobbs, Alamance Battleground, and others; pushing for more buildings to showcase, maintain, and grow the North Carolina Transportation Museum's holdings; telling the story of a middle-class Raleigh student who was editor of the Daily Tar Heel and ended up doing really, really well in New York despite many challenges; or corralling school children (with legislators in tow) to help parade North Carolina's recouped copy of the Bill of Rights to the State Capitol "for a limited time only." Kevin believes in getting people excited about history; about where they are from; about acknowledgment of what was done right and what was done terribly wrong; about making new things out of old material, while leaving the underlying fabric still recognizable.

Telling the full story in the fullest possible way. Telling them in a way that will excite another Tar Heel Junior Historian, or inspire another Junior Johnson — or Junior ROTC cadet, or the Junior League, or a Junior Ranger, or a Junior Fireman, or even a few little doctors and lawyers to, as the state's motto says, "be, rather than to seem." But, as he says, sometimes you do need a bit of show to push the substance.

Perhaps it is somewhat ironic that we come together tonight to honor a man who has picked up this thread and that thread of history and woven them into some of our most visited and beloved places and adventures, when he is the same man who managed to lose a pair of trousers just by walking across a parking lot. While not the most organized person, he is, truly, Mr. Organization.

Kevin's commitment to each organization, to his state, his University, his faith, his family, and his friends have been a benefit to all of them, and will be in the ages to come. And, y'all, that's the truth.













CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Margot and Rob Christensen Mark Hewitt, David Egner • Maria Estorino, Richard Stevens, Hugh Stevens • Mary Boone Bernsen, Hal Bernsen, Helen R. Tibbo • Matt Boles, Steve Cherry • Michael Hill, Copie Cain, Jim Clark • Myrick Howard, Mac Whatley • Noah LeGrand, Kevin Cherry, Weston Ewart



















CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
• Kelly Alexander, Joe Seagle, Patrick Wooten • Lynn Roberts, Fred Hobson, Terry Roberts • John and Kyle Arrowood • Kay Wyche, Joe Mobley, Jo Ann Williford, Dick Lankford, Donna Kelly • Kevin Cherry, Maury and Dru York • Lenora Whichard, Jessica Aylor • Lloyd Kramer, Rob Clay • Lynn Roundtree, Warren Bingham

Page 28 | Kevin Cherry

Kevin Cherry | Page 29

Presentation of 2024 Society Award

EVENING SESSION IN CHAPEL HILL, NC



Bland Simpson, President of the North Caroliniana Society, and Kevin Cherry

Well... let's all sing "I'll Fly Away," go have some ham biscuits, and talk about the flowers.

I am truly honored by this recognition, especially since so many who had such an impact upon my own life have their names etched on the base of this award's ceremonial silver cup: mountains among us. I was truly lucky to be the assistant, flunky, and all-around gofer for so many of them for so many years. I got to be close to their huge accomplishments while I managed to pursue some of my own little projects.

I have to admit that it does seem strange to be standing here and not be waiting to be volunteered to do something. "Kevin, will you make sure these things make it back to Wilson Library?" I'm sure, if he could get a toll-free long distance line, Dr. H. G. Jones is listening in right now. And William S. Powell, it seems, should be here telling me about something he discovered while looking up something else, with the suggestion that I might want to write about it. And John Sanders should certainly be here, with a book that he is sure I will benefit from

reading: "Come to my car. I have a book for you." Shoot, now I even work for an organization that is named for one of the honorees recognized on this silver cup.

My thanks to those North Carolina greats, whether listed on that cup or not, who all seemed to agree that I had spare time on my hands.

Few of us accomplish much alone. I know I haven't. If you have ever served on a committee, board, or something like it with me; if you ever worked on a project with me; if you ever wrote or edited something with me (always making me sound much smarter than I am); if you ever took me to the legislature to, as Secretary Betty Ray McCain said, "We are going to go across that street, and march into that building, and we are going to beg and whine." If you have ever done any of these things with me or anything else like these things, would you please stand up. Thank you for putting up with me! And, of course, thank you to Mama and Daddy and my sisters, Lana and Allison.

I was a graduate student the first time I ever attended one of these annual meetings. Dr. Isaac Copeland, retired Director of the Southern Historical Collection, asked me to come so I could help him with his wheelchair. I was more than happy to do so. When we entered the Carolina Inn that evening, I saw so many, as Bland Simpson calls them, *"Statriots,"* men and women who have, simply put, made North Carolina a better place. Y'all are still here and still doing that work, I see.

A few years later, before a North Caroliniana Society dinner, I ran down the hall to the euphemism and claimed a urinal and, believe it or not, in came Hugh Morton of Grandfather Mountain fame to stand alongside me. And then, William A. V. Cecil of Biltmore came in and stood on the other side of me. They shared small talk back and forth past me.

Well, that event — along with those names on that silver cup — sort of sums up my life. Thank y'all for allowing me these last few decades to "piddle between the mountains."



Standing Ovation for Kevin Cherry













CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Timothy Owens, Doug Fruehling, Joe Mobley Richard and Mary Hunter Patricia Samford, Michael Hill Rachel Willis, Claudia O'Hale Margaret Bauer, Terry Roberts Susan Kluttz, Karin Cochran Susi and Steve Hamilton Todd Johnson, Shelby Stephenson









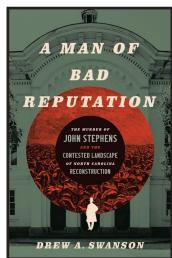
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Leslie Weil, Emily Weil Wayne Goodwin, Kevin Cherry, Lisa Lindsay William McKinney, Richard Holcomb Willis Whichard, Tom Earnhardt Vicki Rovine, Margaret Bauer, Rebecca Godwin Lynn Roberts, Leslie McKesson, Mary Charlotte Safford, Terry Roberts

A Man of Bad Reputation: The Murder of John Stephens and the Contested Landscape of North Carolina Reconstruction

Drew A. Swanson 2023 NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY BOOK AWARD



Drew A. Swanson



A Man of Bad Reputation: The Murder of John Stephens and the Contested Landscape of North Carolina Reconstruction

ABOUT THE BOOK

On May 21, 1870, a party of Ku Klux Klansmen assassinated North Carolina state senator John W. Stephens in the basement of the Caswell County Courthouse during a political rally. For sixty-five years thereafter the perpetrators remained unknown, and the event became one of the state's most infamous mysteries. The event launched a declaration of martial law, fruitless trials, congressional hearings, discounted confessions, and secretive admissions, along the way involving some of North Carolina's most influential people, from governors to novelists to historians. The violence and debates were rooted in the intimate details of the rural countryside, Swanson demonstrates, tied to contested ideas about how southern agriculture should proceed in the wake of emancipation. *A Man of Bad Reputation* traces John Stephens's life, death, and afterlife in an engaging narrative that explores the embattled process of North Carolina's Reconstruction, and, through it and its aftermath, the nation's uneasy grappling with the legacy of the Civil War.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Drew Swanson is the Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Distinguished Professor of Southern History at Georgia Southern University. Swanson's award-winning scholarship includes publications in such leading forums as *The American Historical Review, Environmental History, Agricultural History,* and *Environment & History,* as well as four books on the rural and environmental history of the American South. His current book projects include a study of the consumer culture of American hunting and an environmental history of white-tailed deer. He is active in several scholarly organizations and is past president of the Agricultural History.

ABOUT THE AWARD

Ihe North Caroliniana Society established the North Caroliniana Book Award in 2003 to recognize annually "the book that captures the essence of North Carolina by contributing powerfully to an understanding of the state." Authors are eligible regardless of residency. However, neither authors nor publishers submit books; instead, a committee privately surveys all books published during the year and chooses the volume that it believes "makes a positive contribution and appears to have the best chance of standing the test of time as a classic volume of North Caroliniana."

Presentation of 2023 Society Book Award

Michael R. Hill, Chairman, Society Book Award Committee

AFTERNOON SESSION IN CHAPEL HILL, NC

Ihe late John Sanders, director of the School — then Institute — of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was a friend and mentor of tonight's honoree, Kevin Cherry. Mr. Sanders also was a dedicated reader of North Carolina history and frequently reviewed manuscripts for authors and for the UNC Press. Mr. Sanders's test to determine the worthiness of a textbook or survey of state history was to see how the writer treated the Reconstruction era, the period least understood and most often misportrayed. He would have found much to admire in this year's North Caroliniana Book Award winner. To remind you, the objective of the award is to identify the year's best book about North Carolina. This presentation is the award's twenty-first.

The book selected this year is Drew Swanson's Man of Bad Reputation: The Murder of John Stephens and the Contested Landscape of North Carolina Reconstruction, published by UNC Press. A close second was Gregg Hecimovich's The Life and Times of Hannah Crofts: The True Story of The Bondwoman's Narrative. Also finalists this year were Andrew Gardner's Binkley: A Congregational History; Eric Medlin's Sawdust in Your Pockets: A History of the North Carolina Furniture Industry; and Flora Fraser's Flora MacDonald: Her Life and Times. Joining me as judges for this year's award were Jeff Crow, Rebecca Godwin, Howard Covington, and Jim Ervin.

This year's award recipient, Drew Swanson, is Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Distinguished Professor of Southern History at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro. Born in southside Virginia, he attended Lees-MacRae College and Appalachian State University before completing his Ph.D. at the University of Georgia. Among his previous books is one about brightleaf tobacco. The present book is a powerful and insightful study of an event in 1870 that led to the so-called "Kirk-Holden War" and the impeachment and removal of Governor W. W. Holden. The murder of state senator John Stephens at the Caswell County Courthouse, along with the mutilation and hanging of Wyatt Outlaw in Alamance County, was



Michael Hill and Drew Swanson

the culmination of Ku Klux Klan violence in the region during that period.

Professor Swanson details, step-by-step, the horrifying event that occurred in Yanceyville, North Carolina. His is an honest appraisal and a nuanced portrait of those involved. The murder resonated for generations. Indeed, in 1919 one of the perpetrators, John Lea, penned a confession and visited R. D. W. Connor, the director of the State Archives in Raleigh, to place on file his account of the violent events. Connor, it must be said, was sympathetic with Lea and it was his version of events that was accepted by historians, students, and readers for decades. Remember, this was the era when D. W. Griffith's film "Birth of a Nation" was played at the White House, and the Dunning School of historians, among them UNC-Chapel Hill's J. G. deRoulhac Hamilton, dominated the discourse about the Reconstruction period.

The latter part of Swanson's study is historiographical, a much needed corrective to the Connor/Hamilton school. His is not the first to set straight the story. He provides nods to Otto Olsen, Allen Trelease, and Carole Troxler, among others. But his is a top-notch story of this shameful chapter in our state's history.



Philosophy major Robert Elliot Clay is committed to expanding healthcare access as a 2023-2024 Zietlow Civic Engagement Fellow at Carolina Public Humanities. Working with Professor Jonathan Oberlander, Rob aims to demystify signing up for Medicaid by low-income and historically marginalized Orange County citizens. As a Public Service Program Coordinator with medical experience, he began developing his community engagement philosophy at the Carolina Center for Public Service in 2022.

Robert Clay — a senior from Durham, North Carolina — is a philosophy major at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

ABOUT THE AWARD

Ihe William Stevens Powell Award was established in 2002 by the North Caroliniana Society in honor of the Society's first president, long-time vicepresident, and distinguished historian. The award recognizes a graduating senior in The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who is judged to have contributed most to an understanding of the history and traditions of the first state university, or who has done the most to develop interest in, and understanding of, the history of the state of North Carolina.

The winner of the award receives an autographed copy of Professor Powell's book, *The First State University*, and his or her name is engraved on a silver plaque that is displayed in the North Carolina Collection's Reading Room in the Wilson Library. The William Stevens Powell Award honoree is also recognized at the UNC-CH's annual spring Chancellor's Awards ceremony.

Presentation of 2024 William S. Powell Award

James W. Clark Jr., President, North Caroliniana Society

AFTERNOON SESSION IN CHAPEL HILL, NC

Drew Swanson, this year's Book Award honoree, has just called Bill Powell a foundation-building or a foundational figure in North Carolina history and its interpretation. I want to invite to the stage now Rob Clay, who is a philosophy major, graduating here this spring. Yesterday afternoon at the Chancellor's awards' ceremony, this young man from Durham won the William S Powell Award.



Jim Clark presenting Rob Clay with the William S. Powell Award.

NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY AWARD RECIPIENTS

- **1978** Paul Green **1979** — Albert Coates 1980 — Sam I. Ervin Ir. **1981** — Sam Ragan **1982** — Gertrude Sprague Carraway 1983 — John Fries Blair **1984** — William C. & Ida H. Fridav **1985** — William S. Powell **1986** — Mary D.B.T. & lames H. Semans **1987** — David Stick **1988** — William McWhorter Cochrane **1989** — Emma Neal Morrison **1990** — Burke Davis **1991** — Lawrence F. London **1992** — Frank Hawkins Kenan **1993** — Charles Kuralt **1994** — H.G. lones **1994** — Archie K. Davis **1994** — North Carolina Collection **1995** — J. Carlyle Sitterson 1995 — LeRoy T. Walker **1996** — Hugh MacRae Morton
- **1997** John L. Sanders
- **1998** Doris Waugh Betts
- **1999** Reynolds Price
- **2000** Richard H. lenrette
- **2001** Wilma Dykeman
- **2002** Frank Borden Hanes Sr. **2003** — Maxine Swalin **2004** — Elizabeth Vann Moore **2004** — W. Trent Ragland Jr. **2005** — W. Dallas Herring **2005** — John Hope Franklin **2006** — Betty Ray McCain 2006 — Joseph F. Steelman 2007 — William B. Aycock **2007** — Fred Chappell 2008 — Henry E. & Shirley T. Frye 2008 — Robert & Jessie Rae Scott 2009 — James E. Holshouser Jr. **2010** — Bland Simpson **2011** — Lindsay C. Warren Jr. **2012** — Lee Smith **2013** — Thomas W. Lambeth **2014** — Myrick Howard **2015** — Herb Jackson **2016** — Willis P. Whichard 2017 — H. David Bruton **2018** — Catherine Ward Bishir **2019** — Alice & Jerry Cotten **2020** — D.G. Martin **2021** — Howard N. Lee
- **2022** William Mangum **2023** Martin Brinkley
- **2023** Kevin Cherry

- NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY BOOK AWARD RECIPIENTS
- 2003 Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern for A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina(University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- **2004** Timothy B. Tyson for *Blood* Done Sign My Name: A True Story (Crown Publishers, 2004).
- **2005** Joe Mobley for "War Governor of the South": North Carolina's Zeb Vance in the Confederacy (University Press of Florida, 2005).
- 2006 William S. Powell for Encyclopedia of North Carolin (University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
- **2007** Karl E. Campbell for Senator Sam: Last of the Founding Fathers (University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
- **2008** Anna Ragland Hayes for Without Precedent: The Life of Susie Marshall Sharp (University of North Carolina Press, 2008).
- 2009 Mark L. Bradley for *Bluecoats* and *Tar Heels: Soldiers and Civilians in Reconstruction North Carolina* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009).

- **2010** Robert R. Korstad and James L. Leloudis for *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
- 2011 David Silkenat for Moments of Despair: Suicide, Divorce, & Debt in Civil War Era North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
- 2012 David S. Cecelski for *The Fire* of *Freedom: Abraham Galloway & the Slaves' Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
- 2013 Sarah Caroline Thuesen for Greater than Equal: African American Struggles for Schools and Citizenship in North Carolina, 1919-1965 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).
- 2014 Jeffrey Reaser and Walt Wolfram for *Talkin' Tar Heel: How Our Voices Tell the Story of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).
- 2015 Jessica Bandel, Michael Hill, and Mark Anderson Moore for The Old North State at War: The North Carolina Civil War Atlas (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, 2015).

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2016 — David Silkenat for Driven From Home: North Carolina's Civil War Refugee Crisis (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016)

- 2017 Larry E. Tise and Jeffrey J. Crow for New Voyages to Carolina: Reinterpreting North Carolina History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017)
- 2018 Ansley Herring Wegner and Jeff Miles for *This Day In North Carolina* designed by Sheilah Barrett Carroll (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, 2018)
- 2019 Howard Covington for Fire and Stone: The Making of The University of North Carolina under Presidents Edward Kidder Graham and Harry Woodburn Chase (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library, 2019)

- **2020** David Menconi for Step It Up & Go: The Story of North Carolina Popular Music, from Blind Boy Fuller and Doc Watson to Nina Simone and Superchunk ((Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020)
- 2021 Bland Simpson for North Carolina: Land of Water, Land of Sky (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021)
- 2022 Lindley S. Butler for *A History* of North Carolina in the Proprietary Era, 1629-1729 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022)
- 2023 Drew A. Swanson for A Man of Bad Reputation: The Murder of John Stephens and the Contested Landscape of North Carolina Reconstruction (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2023)

NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY WILLIAM STEVENS POWELL AWARD RECIPIENTS

2002 — Eric David Johnson
2004 — Jonathan Slain
2008 — Eve Marie Carson
2011 — Frank O'Hale
2015 — Isaac Warshauer
2018 — Morgan Vickers
2019 — Jordan Kathryn Jenkins
2022 — Abby Wooten
2023 — Seth Thomas Moore
2024 — Robert Elliot Clay

North Caroliniana Society Imprints Numbers 1-65 (1978-2024)

No. 1. An Evening at Monticello: An Essay in Reflection (1978) by Edwin M. Gill No. 2. The Paul Green I Know (1978) by Elizabeth Lay Green No. 3. The Albert Coates I Know (1979) by Gladys Hall Coates No. 4. The Sam Ervin I Know (1980) by Jean Convers Ervin **No. 5.** Sam Ragan (1981) by Neil Morgan No. 6. Thomas Wolfe of North Carolina (1982) edited by H.G. Jones No. 7. Gertrude Sprague Carraway (1982) by Sam Ragan No. 8. John Fries Blair (1983) by Margaret Blair McCuiston No. 9. William Clyde Friday and Ida Howell Friday (1984) by Georgia Carroll Kyser and William Brantley Aycock No. 10. William S. Powell, Historian (1985) by David Stick and William C. Friday No. 11. "Gallantry Unsurpassed" (1985) edited by Archie K. Davis No. 12. Mary and Jim Semans, North Carolinians (1986) by W. Kenneth Goodson No. 13. The High Water Mark (1986) edited by Archie K. Davis No. 14. Raleigh and Quinn: The Explorer and His Boswell (1987) edited by H.G. Jones No. 15. A Half Century in Coastal History (1987) by David Stick No. 16. Thomas Wolfe at Eighty-seven (1988) edited by H.G. Jones

No. 17. A Third of a Century in Senate Cloakrooms (1988) by William McWhorter Cochrane
No. 18. The Emma Neal Morrison I Know (1989) by Ida Howell Friday
No. 19. Thomas Wolfe's Composition

Books (1990) edited by Alice R. Cotten No. 20. My Father, Burke Davis (1990)

by Angela Davis-Gardner

No. 21. A Half Century with Rare Books (1991) by Lawrence F. London

No. 22. Frank H. Kenan: An Appreciation (1992) edited by Archie K. Davis

No. 23. Growing Up in North Carolina by Charles Kuralt, and The Uncommon Laureate by Wallace H. Kuralt (1993)

No. 24. Chancellors Extraordinary: J.Carlyle Sitterson and LeRoy T. Walker (1995) by William C. Friday and Willis P. Whichard

No. 25. *Historical Consciousness in the Early Republic* (1995) edited by H.G. Jones

No. 26. Sixty Years with a Camera (1996) by Hugh M. Morton

No. 27. William Caston as a Public Man (1997) by John L. Sanders

No. 28. William P. Cumming and the Study of Cartography (1998) edited by Robert Cumming

No. 29. My Love Affair with Carolina (1998) by Doris Waugh Betts

No. 30. A Single but Huge Distinction (1999) by Reynolds Price

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No. 31. Richard Jenrette's Adventures in Historic Preservation (2000) edited by H.G. Jones

No. 32. Sketches in North Carolina USA 1872 to 1878 (2001) by Mortimer O. Heath; edited by H.G. Jones

No. 33. *Roots and Branches* (2001) by Wilma Dykeman

No. 34. Glimmers in the Gloaming (2002) by Frank Borden Hanes Sr.

No. 35. Coming of Age in North Carolina's Fifth Century, by Maxine Swalin and The North Carolina Symphony, by John L. Humber (2003)

No. 36. Reflections (2004) by W. Trent Ragland Jr.

No. 37. Photographers in North Carolina: The First Century, 1842-1941 (2004) Essays by Stephen E. Massengill, H.G. Jones, Jesse R. Lankford

No. 38. North Carolina Conundrum (2005) by John Hope Franklin

No. 39. Poetical Geography of North Carolina (1887; 2006) by Needham Bryan Cobb

No. 40. The Goodliest Land (2006) by Betty Ray McCain

No. 41. Hayes: The Plantation, Its People, and Their Papers (2007) by John G. Zehmer Jr.

No. 42. Center of the Universe (2007) by Fred Chappell

No. 43. William B. Aycock: Our Champion (2007) by Judith W. Wegner

No. 44. Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina (2008) by William S. Price Jr.

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No. 46. A Historic Occasion (2009) by Shirley Taylor Frye and Henry E. Frye No. 47. Surprise of the Century (2009) by James E. Holshouser Jr.No. 48. The Colonial Records of

- North Carolina (2010) edited by William S. Price Jr.
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- Herb Jackson
- **No. 55.** David Lowry Swain and the University of North Carolina, 1835-1868 (2016) by Willis P. Whichard
- **No. 56.** A North Carolina Country Boy (2017) by H. David Bruton
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- **No. 58.** *Reborn Digital* (2018) by Catherine Ward Bishir
- **No. 59.** Camp Bryan and a Tale of Two Letters (2019) by Jerry Cotten, and Going Home Again: The Return of Thomas Wolfe (2019) by Alice Cotten
- **No. 60.** Jim Crow in North Carolina: The Legislative Program from 1865 to 1920 (2020) by Richard Paschal
- **No. 61.** *Inside UNC-TV's* North Carolina Bookwatch (2020) by D.G. Martin
- **No. 62.** My Life of Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges, and Making History (2021) by Howard N. Lee
- **No. 63.** An Artist's Perspective (2022) by William Mangum
- No. 64. An Oboe Memoir (2023) by Martin Brinkley
- No. 65. The Future of Our Histories (2024) by Kevin Cherry













CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Gilyard Callaway Cherry, Kevin Cherry, Annette Callaway Lawing, Steve Cherry, Lana Cherry Parrish, Allison Cherry Horne Gail Swanson, Drew Swanson, Charles Swanson Ethel Clay, Rob Clay, Everett Clay Bland Simpson, Ted Teague Jim Clark, Bob Anthony Jim Clark and Society Awards

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