

NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (04/2/2021)

WNC Historical Association presents Outstanding Achievement Award to Ann Miller Woodford

The WNCHA 2020 Outstanding Achievement Award will be presented to Ann Miller Woodford for her work preserving and promoting the history of African American people in far western North Carolina, on Tuesday, May 18 at 6:30pm via Zoom.

“It is an honor for the Western North Carolina Historical Association to present this award to Ann Miller Woodford,” said Ralph Simpson, President of the WNCHA Board of Trustees. “She has distinguished herself over many years as a fine historian and sensitive artist. Her work has been essential to telling the story of African Americans in far Western North Carolina. Without her ‘heart work,’ this important part of our region's history may have gone untold. We hope this award will encourage others to learn more, and care more, about the diversity of all of Western North Carolina.”

New this year, an \$1,000 prize, generously funded by the WNCHA Board of Trustees, will accompany the award.

“As an awards committee, we marveled at the work that is ongoing in Western North Carolina to offer a more complete history of our region,” said Catherine Frank, Chair of the Awards Committee. “In this rich environment, the work of Ann Miller Woodford is indeed outstanding. As an advocate, historian, and artist, Miller Woodford makes visible the stories of ‘seemingly invisible’ African American people of western North Carolina. Her work ‘When All God’s Children Get Together: A Celebration of the Lives and Music of African American People in Far Western North Carolina,’ offers an account that is personal and well-researched, offering stories that are unique and representative. She encourages all of us to record the stories of our elders and to face the complexity of our shared past. We are honored that she will join the list of Outstanding Achievement Award winners.”

The live Zoom webinar is free to attend and will include brief remarks from the Outstanding Achievement Award Committee Chair, Catherine Frank, WNCHA’s Executive Director, Anne Chesky Smith, WNCHA’s President, Ralph Simpson, and Ann Miller Woodford.

The webinar will also include presentation of the Outstanding Achievement Award trophy and monetary prize as well as a 20-minute film adapted from one of Woodford’s lectures about her publication, “When All God’s Children Get Together: A Celebration of the Lives and Music of African American People in Far Western North Carolina.”

An exhibit of the same name, curated by Ann Miller Woodford, is currently on display at WNCHA’s facility, the Smith-McDowell House Museum in Asheville and runs through the end of June 2021. You can reserve a ticket to visit the exhibit at wnchistory.org.

Since 1954, the Western North Carolina Historical Association has presented its annual Outstanding Achievement Award to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the preservation and promotion of our regional history. Recipients have included Sadie Smathers Patton, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, Ora Blackmun, Johnnie Baxter, The Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County, the South Asheville Cemetery Association, and the Museum of the Cherokee Indian.

The Western North Carolina Historical Association is a nonprofit organization with a mission of preserving and promoting the history and legacy of Western North Carolina through interpretation, education, collection, and collaboration. For more information about WNCHA, call 828 253-9231 or visit www.wnchistory.org.

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