

Alexander Macomb Historical Award
Individual



Award Given: 2011

Awarded to: Ira James “Jim” Holcomb – Washington Township, Macomb, MI

Nominated by: Macomb County Historical Commissioners

Presented Where: 2013 Macomb County Heritage Alliance Annual Meeting /
Lorenzo Cultural Center

Presented By: Macomb County Heritage Alliance

Jim has been a driving force behind preserving history of the Greater Washington Township area for many, many years. One of his most notable accomplishments has been his efforts to work with community leaders to secure the former Washington High School to use as the Greater Washington Area Historical Society’s museum. Talks began in 1973 in regards to forming a historical society in Washington Township. The first of many meetings were held at the historic Loren Andrus Octagon House. Jim was involved in these sessions from the start and in 1975 he had the honor to be elected as the first president of the Greater Washington Area Historical Society. Throughout the years, Jim has served in various board-of-director positions for the group.

Today, the museum holds a vast array of items relating to the history of the area. It also houses an extensive display on George Washington, lots of items from the U.S. Bicentennial and houses what is believed to be the largest collection of Boy Scout memorabilia in Southeast Michigan.

The museum building will commemorate being 100 years old in 2016! As you can imagine, operating a historic building comes with its challenges which many times, involve repairs. Jim’s handyman talents have come to the rescue countless times over the years!

Jim and his wife Jean (who is also very involved with the historical society) have been involved with fund raising, program planning, exhibits and overseeing one of the museum’s largest annual fundraising events – their Super Sunday Craft Show – which has been held for 35 years.

Jim and Jean also live in a very special historic home – one of two octagon homes – in Washington Township. It’s estimated that there are less than 500 historic octagon homes remaining in the United States and Canada. Jim and Jean have tenderly cared for their lovely home since 1972 when they moved to this area and purchased it.

Jim’s many years of commitment and his passion for preserving history along with the adoration and respect he has garnered from the community and fellow historians are just a few of the reasons Jim was selected as the 2011 recipient of the Alexander Macomb Historical Award for an individual.