

**Tennessee Historical Commission**  
**Press Office**  
**For Immediate Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact: Caty Dirksen

May 13, 2025

caty.dirksen@tn.gov

**Tennessee Historical Commission 2025 Certificate of Merit Award Recipients Announced**

NASHVILLE – The Tennessee Historical Commission has announced the five recipients of this year’s annual Certificate of Merit Awards. These awards are presented each May during National Preservation Month. Since 1975, THC’s Certificate of Merit Program has recognized exemplary work by individuals, groups, organizations, corporations, or governmental entities to further promote historic preservation or the study of history in Tennessee. Nominations are solicited from the public in December of the preceding year and judged by category. “Our state benefits greatly from individuals, businesses, and organizations who work to protect and enhance our treasured heritage,” notes Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer Patrick McIntyre.

The Historic Preservation category recognizes excellence in the preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of a historic or archaeological site, preservation leadership, preservation planning, publications related to historic preservation, public programming, or research. 2025 recipients in this category include:

- **Bob Holliday**, for the preservation of the African Methodist/Wyly Cemetery and Reagon Cemetery. Through GPR survey, these cemeteries were mapped, and burials will be able to be marked in future projects. Additional work was also completed to remove hazardous trees from the cemetery and a Cultural Resource Vegetation Plan was created for Johnsonville State Historic Park.
- **J. Channing Greene**, for the preservation of numerous cemeteries around Newport, TN. Greene has conducted research on local cemeteries, cleaned headstones, removed vegetation, and placed flags on veteran’s gravesites.
- **Serena Gilbert**, for the preservation of the Promise Land Historic Site. Through a capital improvement project, Gilbert preserved the historic structure of the Promise Land School. In addition, through work with the Promise Land Heritage Association, Gilbert promoted the history of the community.
- **Metro Nashville Historical Commission**, for the preservation of Sunnyside Mansion in Nashville. This 1853 Greek Revival home serves as offices for MNHC. In this project, structural damage was repaired, and outbuildings were repaired and reconstructed for public use.

The Book or Public Programming category recognizes notable achievements toward advancing the study of Tennessee history through certain types of books or public programming. The 2025 recipient in this category is:

- **The Grundy County Historical Society**, for their efforts to document all cemeteries within the county. This research tool has been compiled into a three volume book series.



Tennessee Historical Commission  
Press Office  
For Immediate Release

For more information about the Tennessee Historical Commission, please visit the [website](#). Applications for the 2026 Merit Awards can be found [here](#). For additional information, please contact Caty Dirksen at [caty.dirksen@tn.gov](mailto:caty.dirksen@tn.gov).

###