



For Immediate Release
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Federation of Genealogical Societies Announces **2020 Awards**

9/2/2020 – Austin, TX.

The Federation of Genealogical Societies announced the recipients of its 2020 Awards at its Virtual Family History Conference on September 2, 2020. These award recipients have exhibited outstanding service, excellence, and achievement in genealogical pursuits.

Repository of the Year Award: Mid-Continent Public Library and Midwest Genealogy Center

This award recognizes a library, archive, historical society, museum, academic institution, or other repository for its exceptional impact and contribution to the genealogy community, preservation of records, access to records, technology advances, or other services to family history. The Mid-Continent Public Library and the Midwest Genealogy Center were recognized for their exceptional impact and contributions to the genealogy community. Cheryl Lang, Manager of the Midwest Genealogy Center, and Steve Potter, Director of the Mid-Continent Public Library, provided significant support to prepare for the 2020 FGS Conference originally planned for in Kansas City on September 2. Although the conference transitioned to virtual, MCPL continued to support librarians and genealogists by providing a learning experience entitled “Why Genealogy Matters to Public Libraries,” by Steve Potter, which is available for free with a registration to the 2020 Family History Conference.

George E. Williams Award: Rick and JoAnn Shields

This award is given in recognition of outstanding contributions within a single year to either FGS, a member organization, or both. Rick and JoAnn Shields were recognized for their above and beyond efforts to organize and implement the FGS 2020 Conference and transition it to a virtual event. Without their efforts, the last FGS conference would not have been possible.

Rabbi Malcom H. Stern Humanitarian Award: Miriam Weiner

The Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern Humanitarian Award recognizes the lifetime contributions of a rare individual whose positive personal influence and example have fostered unity in the genealogical community, provided leadership to its individual members, and helped make family history a vital force in the community at large. This year we honor Miriam Weiner for her leadership and contributions to the genealogical community. Miriam has been described as the genealogist who lifted the “Archival Iron Curtain.” For

years, she has actively worked to make previously inaccessible records available to those interested in researching the history of their ancestors. Her career represents the highest standard that embodies both the purpose and spirit of this award.

Loretto Dennis Szucs Award: Gary Mokotoff

This award recognizes the contributions of an individual whose positive personal influence and extraordinary service to FGS and the genealogy industry have gone above and beyond the norm, impacting the overall benefit to the genealogical community at large and spreading the awareness of family history to the general public. This year Gary Mokotoff is recognized for his many years of dedicated service and for helping to revolutionize the way we do research. Gary became involved in genealogy in 1979 and has spent many years serving the genealogical community in many leadership positions. He used his computer background to develop some of the earliest databases for Jewish genealogy including the Jewish Genealogical Family Finder (now called JewishGen Family Finder), a database used by more than 100,000 Jewish genealogists. Gary was also instrumental in founding the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.

David S. Vogels Jr. Award: Paul Milner and Frederick E. Moss

This award is given to two individual this year in recognition of outstanding career contributions to FGS. FGS recognizes Paul Milner for his years of service to FGS and his contributions to the FORUM magazine with over 1,000 book reviews contributed during the last 25 years.

FGS also recognizes Frederick E. Moss for his years of guidance and tireless service to FGS and the Records Preservation and Access Committee. Fred has worked tirelessly to help the organization and to protect access to documents of importance to family historians.

Director's Award: FamilySearch and Pat Rand

The Director's Award is presented in recognition of both exceptional contributions to the field of genealogy and family history, and extra-mile efforts to promote good will and improve services. This year, FGS recognizes both an organization and individual for their exceptional contributions. FGS first recognizes FamilySearch for the efforts of its volunteers who contributed to the US- Mexican War Soldiers and Sailors database project.

FGS also recognizes Pat Rand for her extraordinary efforts and contribution to the US-Mexican War Soldiers and Sailors database project to preserve the history and commemorate the veterans who sacrificed in this war. Pat endured for years to make sure that this project was accomplished and it is now available on the Palo Alto Battlefield National Park Service website. Pat was also recognized by the National Park Service with the Regional Hartzog Enduring Service Award. The Hartzog Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service was created by former NPS director George Hartzog, Jr. and his wife Helen to honor the efforts of volunteers who go beyond the normal call of duty. The Hartzog Enduring Service Award recognizes an individual who made a

significant difference through specific volunteer work that has a sustained, positive impact and advances the NPS mission

Genealogical Tourism Award: Jacqueline Bidanec, HPN Global Meeting Services

This award recognizes and encourages a phenomenon garnering greater public attention: tourism and travel related to family history. This year FGS recognizes Jacqueline Bidanec and HPN Global Meeting Services for proving superb event planning and management support, including during the difficult times resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

FORUM Writer's Award: Jane Neff Rollins

The FORUM Writer's Award recognizes an outstanding contribution to the FGS magazine, FORUM. This year's recipient is Jane Neff Rollins, for her article "Labor Union Documents: Genealogically Relevant Sources," which appeared in the Spring 2019 issue of FORUM. Rollins's contribution provided a wealth of information on the types of records available, how to find them, and how they can be used for genealogy.

Award of Merit

For contributions to the US-Mexican War database project, the following individuals are recognized with the Award of Merit:

- Karen Weaver, NPS
- Barbara Brown, Texas
- David Davenport, California
- David A. Lambert, Massachusetts
- Linda Sparks, Arizona
- Curt Witcher, Indiana
- Craig Scott, North Carolina
- John Peterson, NPS (retired)
- Patricia Adams, Florida
- Joshua Taylor, New York

The Federation of Genealogical Societies congratulates all of the 2020 award recipients. A special thank you also goes out to Awards Chair, Juliana Szucs, for her efforts in this endeavor.

About the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS)

The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) was founded in 1976 and empowers the genealogical and family history community, especially its societies and organizations, by advocating for the preservation and access of records and providing resources that enable genealogical organizations to succeed in pursuing their missions. FGS helps genealogical societies and family history enthusiasts alike to strengthen and grow through online resources, *FGS FORUM* magazine, and through its annual national conference. FGS launched the Preserve the Pensions project in 2010 to raise more than \$3 million to digitize and make freely available the pension files from the War of

1812. Fundraising was completed for that project in 2016 and the digitization continues. FGS was also the driving force behind the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors project alongside the National Parks Service. To learn more visit [fgs.org](https://www.fgs.org).

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