

Where  
the past  
is present

# DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Incoming Society Trustee William Volz, Mary Kramer, Trustee Sarah McClure and Chip McClure at the 2014 Detroit Historical Society Ball at the Masonic Temple. Photo by Elayne Gross.



Society CEO Bob Bury, Bill Chope and Society President Thomas C. Buhl at the 2014 Society Ball. Photo by Elayne Gross.

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## DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS:

The map on the cover of this year's Annual Report captures Detroit in 1919, a time when the city was on the verge of greatness. The auto industry had triggered a five-year growth spurt of population and wealth that would continue for another decade.

Today, almost a century later, Detroit appears to be in the midst of another wave of positive growth, and, as indicated by the stars on the map marking our locations in Midtown and Belle Isle, the Detroit Historical Society is at the center of it all.

The past year was a year of positive change and successful transition for the Society and our community.

As an organization, we returned to a post-campaign mode with our highly successful Past>Forward campaign behind us. As detailed in this report, our investment at both of our museums has paid off with solid attendance growth at both facilities and increasingly positive visitor satisfaction ratings from all of our guests – from the thousands of students who visit as part of school tours to the rapidly growing number of people who visit us as part of corporate events, meetings, weddings and other celebrations.

It was also year during which we planned for the future. A dedicated team of Trustees and staff completed a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the next five years and clarified our organizational mission.

Our new mission statement is simple and straight-forward and captures what we do: we tell Detroit's stories and why they matter.

Also key to our future are five strategic focuses that will shape our organization and keep us moving forward, including:

- Increasing our community engagement and organizational impact;
- Ensuring our long term financial stability;
- Effectively managing and safeguarding our collection;
- Improving our awareness, branding and marketing, and
- Ensuring an organizational culture that promotes growth, stability and continuity.

In addition to taking steps to define the future of our organization, we also announced a major new initiative, known as *Detroit 1967: Looking Back to Move Forward*. This multi-year effort will engage a broad base of community partners to reflect on what is widely regard as one of the most significant events of the last 100 years. Together with numerous community partners, we have begun to build a comprehensive collection of informative oral histories, plan for an exhibit of local and national significance and develop a wide range of educational and outreach programs. The objective of this project is to use an understanding of this difficult time in our region's history to move the community forward and build upon the positive momentum we are currently enjoying.

As you review this year's report, please be reminded that we couldn't accomplish any of what you will read about without your support. Thank you – and know that we will continue to do our best to earn your continued support in the days ahead.

Sincerely,



**THOMAS C. BUHL**  
PRESIDENT  
DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**ROBERT A. BURY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO  
DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 2014-15 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### IN CURATORIAL:

- In Fall 2014, the Society received a second federal IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) grant for the digitization of our audio visual archives.
  - Through July 2015, the collections digitization team has digitized 185 films and videos.
  - Highlights include the Sue Marx promotional films, the launching of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, Detroit Historical Society fashions from the 1970s and the last voyage of the *J.T. Wing*.
- The Society, under the direction of Joel Stone, finalized the conservation of Detroit River Cannon #6, and completed installation on a reproduction carriage at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.

### IN COLLECTIONS:

- The collections and exhibitions teams developed and implemented three new traveling exhibitions: *Fighting on the Home Front: WWII Propaganda Posters*, *Documenting Detroit* and *Jerome Biederman: Automotive Paintings*
- Over 15 different venues borrowed artifacts from the collection this past fiscal year. Some of these locations include the Ella Sharp Museum, the Ford Piquette Plant, the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum and the Canadian International Auto Show.
- As part of an ongoing collection inventory both at the Collections Resource Center and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, the team has accessioned an

### IN EDUCATION:

- Society staff and volunteer docents welcomed a total of 12,941 paid school field trip participants to the Dossin Great Lakes Museum and the Detroit Historical Museum during the year, a 20 percent increase over the previous year.
- Our education department staff developed new partnership programs at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, including the Friends of the Detroit River Water Festival on April 30 and the Belle Isle Nature Zoo Summer Camp in June and July.



The unveiling of Detroit River Cannon #6 at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.

additional 4,103 items. These items are things that have been in our possession but were not formally accessioned when they were donated. Many of these items date back as far as the 1950s.

- We brought in over \$22,500 in earned revenue from our digitized images, artifact loans and research requests.

### WITH OUR AFFINITY GROUPS:

- The Black Historic Sites Committee honored Detroit Lions head coach Jim Caldwell and celebrated its 43rd anniversary with a special event honoring African American trailblazers in July 2014 at the Detroit Historical Museum. The group also hosted its second annual program celebrating the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in January.
- The Dossin Maritime Group's annual Lost Mariners Remembrance event on November 10th featured another sell-out crowd. The group also hosted its annual Dossin Invitational Rowing Regatta at the

Dossin Great Lakes Museum in September and its annual Marine Mart at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial in November.

- The Glancy Trains Modular Railroad Club appeared at events year-round, including the annual Maker Faire weekend, Holiday Nights and Day Out with Thomas events at Greenfield Village, the Festival of Trees and a variety of Metro Detroit train shows.



## FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- The 2014 Holiday Ball at the Detroit Masonic Temple was the Society's most successful Ball to date, grossing over \$500,000 and welcoming approximately 450 guests for an evening of history, charity and entertainment.
- Our celebration of Detroit's 313th Birthday – the "313 of the 313" – saw over 300 guests gather at the Detroit Historical Museum for an outdoor street party with food trucks and music, to wish our city a happy birthday!
- The second annual Spring Into Belle Isle gala at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum broke revenue records, grossing nearly \$100,000!
- 655 new members joined the Society during the past year, including 266 Henry Ford Health System employees who took advantage of our corporate membership offer to join while their 100-year anniversary exhibition was on display.
- The Society retained 75 percent of its members throughout the year and met our annual membership fundraising goal.
- The Society's Annual Appeal results grew again, bringing in 12 percent more than the previous year, with over \$50,700 in gifts. The average gift size grew by 25 percent from \$88 to \$117.
- A significant new foundation donor, Bloomberg Philanthropies, made a first time gift of \$300,000 in support of the *Detroit 1967 Project*.
- The Society's "Re-Documenting Detroit" photography collaboration with CCS was selected as a Knight Arts Challenge finalist. Awards will be announced in November 2015.

## FOR EXHIBITIONS:

- The Society applied for and won a Leadership in History "Award of Merit" from the American Association for State and Local History for the *Built by the River* exhibition at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.
- The Community Gallery hosted four new exhibitions, featuring the Junior League of Detroit, St. Vincent Sarah Fisher Center, Kiwanis No. 1 and Henry Ford Health System.
- This year's changing exhibitions included a Detroit Artists Showcase exhibition entitled *Detroiters Paint Detroit: 1930s*, presented in partnership with the Detroit Institute of Arts and their Diego Rivera/Frida Kahlo exhibit; Henry Joy's 1916 Packard in the Automotive Showplace and *Gary Grimshaw: Detroit's Counterculture Poster Artist* in the Center Stage display in the Allesee Gallery of Culture.
- At the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, *Guardians of the Great Lakes* opened in June in the Robert M. Dossin Gallery and a new series of ship models went on display in the Richard and Jane Manoogian Ship Model Showcase.
- The exhibitions team converted the back area of our *America's Motor City* exhibition into a rotating exhibition space featuring topics related to the automotive industry. The first installation is a history of Fruehauf Trailers (below) that opened in June 2015 and will remain open throughout the year.



### FOR FACILITY OPERATIONS:

- A capital improvement plan for major systems and building upgrades needed over the next three years was completed and integrated into future budget plans.
- The Society continues to focus on energy efficiency as an opportunity to lower building operating costs.
  - As a part of these efforts, the Director of Operations is participating in the DTE Energy “Battle of the Buildings” energy conservation challenge.

### FOR EDUCATION:

- Society staff and docents developed a new tour at the Detroit Historical Museum for adult groups, which was provided for 1,150 people.
- For the fifth year in a row, the education staff has organized and facilitated the Michigan History Day Districts 7, 8 and 10 Contest at the Detroit Historical Museum on the first Saturday in March. More than 100 fourth through twelfth grade students from Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Genesee, Livingston and Washtenaw Counties shared their historical scholarship with 35 judges and hundreds of their friends and family.

### FOR FACILITY RENTALS:

- Revenue collected from facility rentals was up 25 percent over the previous year, the third consecutive year of double-digit revenue growth. We exceeded our revenue goal by 37 percent.
- The marketing and operations teams worked to execute 205 rentals plus an additional 13 events that were free of charge for community partners and donated auction items – a total of 218 events and an increase of 4 percent over the previous fiscal year.
- Total group sales (facility rentals plus school and group tours) for the past year exceeded \$292,300 (114 percent of the revenue goal) and an increase of 15 percent over the previous year. Group sales accounted for 49 percent of total earned revenue.



### FOR FIELD TRIPS & GROUP TOURS:

- We welcomed just under 14,500 Group Tour and School Program participants to the museums during the year, an increase of 32 percent from the previous year.
- We booked 55 non-school Group Tours, welcoming over 1,500 participants. Total Group Tours decreased 21 percent over last year, but, similar to the School Programs trend, the number of participants increased by 6 percent.



The Gothic Room in the Polk Family Hall at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum creates a perfect atmosphere for a variety of rental events.



## IN MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS:

- Total page views for the Society's website exceeded one million! The website featured nearly 425,000 sessions over the course of the fiscal year – an increase of 42 percent over the previous year – by more than 275,800 unique visitors – an increase of 41 percent.
- The Detroit Historical Society's social media presence continued its dramatic growth over the last year. The Society's flagship Facebook page grew to 13,737 "likes" during the year – an increase of more than 49 percent.
- On Twitter, the Society's page grew to 7,237 followers – an increase of 44 percent.
- Major media stories of the year included national and international coverage of the Past>Forward closing event, the *Detroit 1967 Project* launch, the installation of the restored 18th century British cannon at the Dossin and the opening of the Henry Ford Health System 100th anniversary exhibition.

## IN OUR MUSEUM STORES:

- Total retail sales were up 31 percent over last year, due in large part to strong sales at the Dossin and the Detroit Shoppes at the Somerset Collection and in downtown Detroit. Total store sales were \$154,300 vs. \$118,100 for the previous year.
- Overall sales at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum finished at over \$22,600 – an increase of 21 percent from last year.

## IN PROGRAMS:

- We hosted 54 Behind the Scenes tours, of which 42 sold out. Of the 54 tours, 8 were overflow tours and 4 were to new locations for the series.
- Treats in the Streets saw 1,358 attendees, trumping the event's average attendance of around 1,100.
- Dossin Great Lakes Museum programming was well-received throughout the year, with a standing-room-only crowd for Lost Mariners Remembrance, over 400 people served between the Belle Isle Stroll and Noon Year's Eve celebrations and over 435 attendees at our 2nd annual Spring Into Belle Isle Family Day.

## WITH OUR VOLUNTEERS:

- We received 27 volunteer applications from our website, 99 from the VolunteerMatch website and 8 from events or walk-ins.
- Society docents volunteered 3,272 hours. Volunteers gave 9,982 hours of service.
- We trained and utilized 21 interns for the Detroit Historical Museum and Collections Resource Center.



- Overall sales from the Online Store finished at over \$3,800 – an increase of 25 percent from the previous year.

## IN VISITOR SERVICES:

- A new timekeeping/scheduling system has been implemented for part-time operations staff, streamlining our payroll process, saving scheduling time, and allowing operations managers to more closely monitor hours.
- Last fall, Oakland University's Lean Team performed an assessment of our retail operations to help us identify problem areas. The assessment identified several areas for improvement, from our everyday activities to inventory controls. We concluded there are some simple steps we can take that will increase our bottom line over time.



A school tour enjoys the America's Motor City exhibit. Photo by Elayne Gross.

## DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Combined Revenue and Expense Statement for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2015

### REVENUE

Philanthropy	\$ 2,570,388
Earned Income	589,761
City and State Funding	501,500
Investment Income	140,572
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,802,221</b>

### EXPENSES

Program Services	\$ 3,030,826
Supporting Services	1,006,128
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,036,954</b>
Net Change to Assets Before Investment Gains	(234,733)
Net Realized and Unrealized Gains on Investments	51,588
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>\$ (183,145)</b>

### Detroit Historical Society BALANCE SHEET • JUNE 30, 2015

Cash and Investments*	\$ 5,005,008
Contributions and Accounts Receivable	1,498,908
Other Assets	4,986,106
	<b>\$ 11,490,022</b>
Liabilities	\$ 100,155
Net Assets — Unrestricted	10,468,074
Net Assets — Restricted	921,793
	<b>\$ 11,490,022</b>

\*The assets do not reflect a Detroit Historical Society Endowment held by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. The fund was valued at \$1,545,313 as of June 30, 2015.

Audited Detroit Historical Society financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015 are available at the Society offices, 5401 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI 48202, or by calling 313.833.7935.



## Government, Corporate and Foundation Donors

### \$100,000-\$500,000

Bloomberg Philanthropies  
City of Detroit  
Institute of Museum and  
Library Services  
Masco Corporation Foundation  
McGregor Fund  
The Kresge Foundation

### \$25,000-\$99,000

Community Foundation for  
Southeast Michigan  
The Fred A. and Barbara M.  
Erb Family Foundation  
Ford Motor Company Fund  
General Motors Foundation  
JPMorgan Chase  
Lear Corporation  
Michigan Council for Arts and  
Cultural Affairs

### \$10,000-\$24,000

Alice Kales Hartwick  
Foundation  
American House Senior Living  
Communities  
Americana Foundation  
Beaumont Health System  
DTE Energy Foundation  
The Sidney E. Frank  
Foundation  
Hudson-Webber Foundation  
Jaffe, Raitt, Heuer & Weiss  
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### \$5,000-\$9,999

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UBS Financial Services  
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Wolverine Division of Toy  
Train Operating Society

Our annual Treats in the Streets event  
drew over 1,300 attendees last October.



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 Ms. Carol Little and Mr. James Stephens



2014 Society Ball co-chairs Stephanie Nicholson and Jill Johnson pose with the Society's 1963 Ford Mustang II Concept Car.



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 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network  
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 Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program  
 ShorePointe Village  
 The Detroit Lions, Inc.  
 Trent Design LLC  
 UBS Financial Services  
 United Way of Washtenaw County  
 Wolverine Division of Toy Train Operating Society



Mimi McMillan, Society Immediate Past President Sandy McMillan, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and wife Lori Maher at the 2014 Society Ball. Photo by Elayne Gross.



In March, the Society announced the *Detroit 1967 Project*, a transformational effort to promote informed discussion and spark clearer understanding about the events of the summer of 1967. Detroit Deputy Mayor Ike McKinnon, who was a patrolman at the Detroit Police Department in 1967, and Joseph L. Hudson, Jr., the Founding Chairman of New Detroit, Inc., gave remarks at the press conference.

## Historian, Benefactor and Patron Members

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The St. Paul Lutheran Church Bell Choir performs at Noel Night.



A holiday party facility rental event enjoys a reception in the Allesee Gallery of Culture.





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*Gary Grimshaw: Detroit's Counterculture Poster Artist opened in the Allesee Gallery of Culture in October.*



*Members of the Dossin family gathered to cut the ribbon for the rededicated Robert M. Dossin Gallery during the annual Spring Into Belle Isle Gala. Photo by Elayne Gross.*

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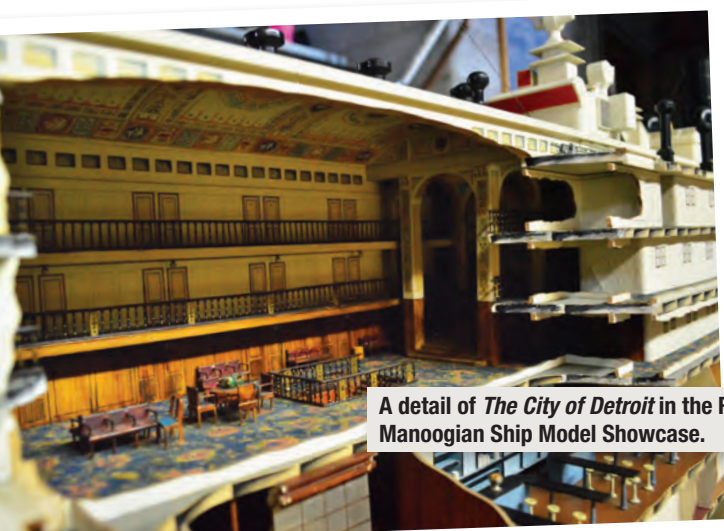
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A detail of *The City of Detroit* in the Richard and Jane Manoogian Ship Model Showcase.



Detroit Lions Head Coach Jim Caldwell, Mark Lee and Albert Ward at the Black Historic Sites Committee's 43rd anniversary celebration. Photo by Elayne Gross.



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**The Detroit 313 Society hosted Detroit's milestone 313th birthday party in Midtown in July at the Detroit Historical Museum, in partnership with Forward Arts and their Detroit Love celebration. The event featured food trucks, music and dancing on Legends Plaza. Photos by Elayne Gross.**



**#DETROITLOVE**





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The Detroit Historical Society tells Detroit's stories and why they matter.

### VISION

To be an integral part of Detroit's present and future by providing meaningful experiences that preserve and share its past.

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