

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



DETROIT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



2021-22 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As of Nov. 17, 2022

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Alexandra and John Decker at the
Centennial Shipmaster's Ball.

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DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS:

For more than 100 years, the Detroit Historical Society has been sharing Detroit's stories and why they matter through exhibitions, programs, and community outreach. The past few years have been some of the most dramatic in our shared history, and we are grateful to all of our stakeholders for your support during this time.

We were thrilled to welcome you back to our museums this year, and we are proud that you have returned in numbers that surpass our pre-pandemic totals. We are also happy that we have been able to continue offering the new and exciting online programming that we developed while our museums were closed for safety. Our virtual tours, traveling exhibitions, social media features, and our first-ever podcast continue to collect followers and have expanded the Society's reach across the country.

We are proud of the new partnerships that we have developed over the past year, which helped us reach new audiences, welcoming thousands of brand new supporters to our museums. Our members and donors are truly the lifeblood of this great institution, and we are thankful that your ranks have continued to grow at a steady pace. Even as our doors were temporarily closed, our membership rolls hit a new high. Our goal is to provide each member with special access, ample information, and a best-in-class member experience, whether we are in-person or virtual. We are adding new benefits all the time, and we hope you continue to enjoy the value of membership with the Society.

The coming year will undoubtedly offer many new challenges and historical moments. As your historical institution, the Detroit Historical Society will be there to document them all. We look forward to serving you for the next century; with your continued support, our shared future looks bright. Thank you.

Sincerely,



ELANA RUGH
PRESIDENT & CEO
DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



JOHN P. DECKER
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On front: Battle of Lake Erie Ships, Frank and Arthur Woodford, c. 1963. These small-scale ships were created for a display commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Lake Erie, which took place in 1813. One of the most significant battles of the War of 1812, it ensured American control of the Great Lakes. This year, the models were on display in the *Gothic Room* as part of the *Maritime Miniatures* exhibition.

2021-22 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EDUCATION, PROGRAMS & OUTREACH:

- The Education team reignited our partnership with the Detroit Public School Community District for their Cultural Passport Program, welcoming 4,000 third grade students in the district to both the Detroit Historical Museum and Dossin Great Lakes Museum. We also welcomed many other students from the Metro area, seeing 10,000 students back in the museum after a pause during the pandemic.
- We hosted 36 Behind the Scenes Tours with participation from 500 guests. We created new partnerships by visiting six new sites and offered three virtual options during the winter months.
- We brought back family friendly programming like the Dossin Easter Egg Hunt in April, Free Holiday Sundays in December, and On the Shoulders of Giants in February, which showcased black-owned Detroit businesses and set the stage for The Hustle.
- Michigan History Day returned as an in-person program at the Detroit Historical Museum on March 5, with 80 participating youth from six schools representing Wayne County.
- 100 Years 100 Stories was a grant-funded program that collected 100 oral histories from local residents and provided useful information about storing and collecting personal artifacts and photographs in the home.
- We partnered with University of Michigan architecture and design students on a program called Racializing Space. Students developed a proposed traveling exhibit and an online exhibition utilizing the statistics and material collected around redlining in Detroit.
- In partnership with Wayne State University, we installed two exhibitions developed by students from the Museum Studies program that highlighted marketing in the 1950s and WWII from the African American perspective.
- The Summer Skiff and Schooner Program took place in July 2021 at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum with Detroit River Story Lab in partnership with the University of Michigan. The boat building workshop hosted 15 students and several subject matter volunteers who helped students craft their boats. Speakers were on hand to talk about the Detroit River, artifact preservation, and a host of other historical subjects.



About 100 children participated in the Dossin's 2022 Easter Egg-stravaganza.



Students in the Skiff and Schooner Program built their own boats and launched them in the Detroit River.

EXHIBITIONS & CURATORIAL:

- *Body by Fisher* opened in August 2021 in the *Motor City Showcase* with a VIP event followed by a family fun reunion featuring a car show, drop-in tours, and a Fisher Body scavenger hunt throughout the museum.
- After *RESPECT* the movie was announced, we worked with the filmmakers to feature garments from the movie in the Detroit Historical Museum. A selection of dresses and accessories was shown in our *Motor City Music* exhibition over the summer months.
- *Hudson's Holidays* opened in November 2021 throughout the museum. The exhibition touched on Hudson's Toyland, fashion department, home goods, early history, the *Hudsonian*, and more. During Free Holiday Sundays in December, guest curator Mike Hauser offered popular tours of the exhibition.
- The *Community Gallery* featured diverse exhibitions including *Exiled to Motown: A History of Japanese Americans in Detroit*, *National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)*, *The Gaelic League of Detroit: Proud Past, Promising Future*, and *Albert Kahn: Innovation & Influence on 20th Century Architecture*.
- *Come Out! In Detroit* was installed in our *Auditorium Showcase* and featured the panels from the comic book recounting the first gay pride parade in Detroit. The anniversary comic book was printed and passed out free of charge at the Detroit Historical Museum and other locations around the Cultural Center.
- The Dossin Great Lakes Museum opened *Maritime Miniatures* in January 2022 with more than 150 ship models installed throughout the galleries. The exhibition remained up through the summer, when it was condensed into the *Robert M. Dossin Gallery*.



Maritime Miniatures displayed 150+ of the Society's ship models together for the first time in 20 years.

MUSEUM RENTALS:

- Despite ongoing challenges related to the pandemic, our facilities were once again popular venues for corporate functions, foundation celebrations, weddings, retirement parties, and birthdays. Unfortunately, we struggled to regain profitability in this area. Consequently, we have decided to stop facility rentals for private social events.
- We are hopeful that by concentrating on corporate, nonprofit, and partnership events we will be able to provide excellent service while returning this area to profitability and working within sustainable staffing levels.



Our Albert Kahn exhibition featured impressive LEGO models in the *Community Gallery*.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS:

- We designed and published the *Centennial News*, an all-new quarterly print newsletter to showcase initiatives around the Society's 100th anniversary. We also ran a dedicated Centennial social media campaign, created by our 2021 summer intern.
- In September 2021, we began a new "Feature Friday" social campaign to showcase some of the films in our YouTube video history archive. We ended the year with nearly 85,000 views of these videos across Instagram and Facebook.
- The *Hudson's Holidays* exhibition opened with strong media support, including all major local print/digital publications and TV hits from Fox 2, WXYZ, DPTV, and WMYD (channel 50). It also saw strong numbers on social media, and some 2,200 visitors came through the museum across four Free Holiday Sundays in December.
- Marketing designed the Giving Tuesday social and email campaign in partnership with Development. We exceeded our goal for digital fundraising on Giving Tuesday, with \$3,200+ raised.
- Our Holiday Shopping social media campaign reached 42,000+ people with 2,050 engagements, and we opened dedicated Facebook and Instagram storefronts for our merchandise. Out of 2,601 visitors that clicked through to the online museum store in December, 36% (954) were referred through our social channels. Several popular items sold out over the holidays, including our 2021 custom Hudson's ornament.
- Rebecca Salminen Witt, Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer, appeared on *History's Greatest Mysteries* on the History Channel for a widely viewed episode on Jimmy Hoffa in Winter 2022.
- Marketing created a comprehensive promotional campaign for the January opening of the Dossin's *Maritime Miniatures* exhibition, with a targeted fundraising ask, new admissions messaging, and a full digital marketing campaign.
- We created a *Maritime Miniatures* exhibit catalog, paired with the Dossin visitor guide, as a visitor giveaway during the run of the ship models exhibition. We also created a self-guided trivia activity and virtual tour in partnership with EPO.
- A Black History Month Pistons ticket giveaway partnership was a big success, raising awareness for our Protect Culture campaign and seeing over 500 free tickets redeemed by museum visitors in February and March.
- The Marketing team re-tooled the Society blog and content creation process to blend the work that our Collections team is doing with more messaging about the Society, the Centennial, and our ongoing programs. We ended the year with 54 new articles posted and nearly 17,000 pageviews, including 10,000+ entrances to the site.
- We reactivated our Google Nonprofit Ad Grant, which provides up to \$10,000 of free keyword advertising to the Society every month.
- We received a free Canva Pro account through their nonprofit grant program, giving us a new user-friendly cloud-based design tool that we are now sharing with Society staff members across departments.



Curator Bill Pringle starred in a virtual tour of the *Maritime Miniatures* exhibition.



Hudson's Holidays enjoyed strong media coverage and steady crowds of visitors during the holiday season.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS (CONT.)

- We kicked off *The Hustle* with a press conference on April 27, featuring all of our project sponsors and Society leadership. We had strong media coverage of the project from all the major local print, online, and TV outlets. The initiative received \$500,000 in sponsorship.
- We finished *The Hustle* nomination period with more than 700 nominations. Our *Hustle* social media campaign received about 175,000 impressions across Facebook, Instagram and Google during May and June.
- We ended the fiscal year with 1.14 million pageviews on the Society website, representing 561,215 users. These numbers were up 18% and 31% respectively year-over-year.
- We saw 205,000 social interactions across platforms this year, with 35,155 users referred to the Society website from social (an increase of 80% from last year), showing strong results from our digital efforts in FY22.



The Hustle honors 36 Black Detroit business owners nominated by the community. It is sponsored by Gilbert Family Foundation, Toyota Motor North America, AAA-The Auto Club Group, Bank of America, PNC Bank, JPMorgan Chase, and Dykema.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- The Society was challenged this past year, as were many museums and non-profits, with what became known as “The Great Resignation.” We said goodbye to several long tenured staff as they changed jobs for better salaries or benefits – or changed careers completely.
- To fill the ranks of our important frontline staff, we had to pivot to a higher hourly wage structure and added a few perks (i.e. monthly meal credit).
- Our full time staff demonstrated remarkable creativity, adaptability, and flexibility as they took on new and additional responsibilities.
- With recent additional funding, Society leadership is doing a comprehensive compensation analysis with the goal of retaining our key staff and expanding our ranks, especially in the areas of Mission and Programming.



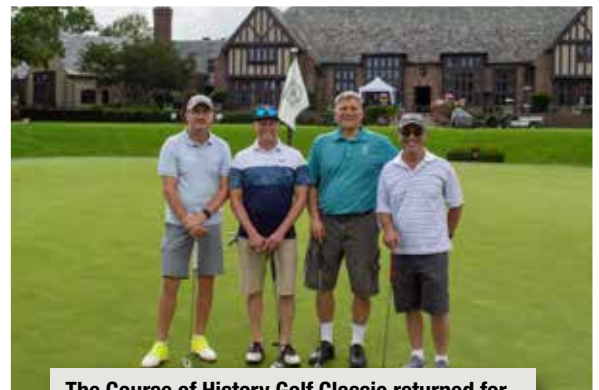
Frontline staff worked hard to keep the museums operating smoothly while giving guests a best-in-class experience.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS:

- Despite ongoing challenges of street construction, museum floods, and the pandemic, we had capacity crowds for two big free summer events – the unveiling of Mickey Lolich's handprints on Detroit's birthday and the opening for *Body by Fisher*.
- The Detroit Historical Museum hosted Jennifer Hudson, star of the new Aretha Franklin biopic *RESPECT*, on August 1 along with United Artists/MGM representatives for a private tour of the *RESPECT* pop-up exhibition and Aretha's handcasting.
- In September, we hosted the 3rd Annual Course of History Golf Classic at the historic Country Club of Detroit. The event raised nearly \$25,000 and featured a curator-led tour of the clubhouse.
- More than 180 people attended the Holiday Ale Trail on December 4 for a safe, fun tasting event that we perfected in 2020 and slotted in again as a successful end-of-year friend and fundraiser (\$4,000+ raised).
- We hosted a volunteer appreciation event on April 28, welcoming back some of our dedicated Society volunteers with a reception and curator chat in the *Streets of Old Detroit*.
- After the Society Ball moved from January due to COVID, the May 7 Centennial Shipmaster's Ball hosted 112 guests and netted nearly \$200,000, out-raising our net revenue for pandemic-related event cancellations earlier in the year.
- Our Ride of the Century event was hosted by Jason Hall at Historic Fort Wayne on July 17 with 50 riders in attendance. We also hosted well-attended CRC and Fort tours after the ride.



Tigers mascot Paws helped Elana Rugh and Mickey Lolich celebrate casting Lolich's handprints for *Legends Plaza*.



The Course of History Golf Classic returned for another successful year at the Country Club of Detroit.



Over 700 guests celebrated the opening of *Body By Fisher* with a VIP preview and a public free admission day.



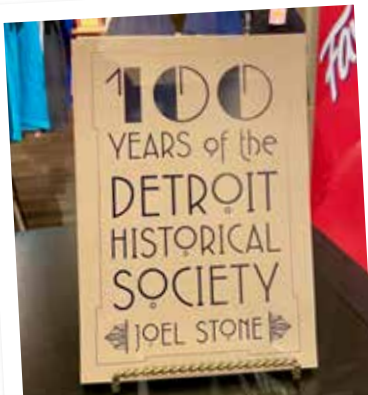
The Centennial Shipmaster's Ball was held in May at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.

OPERATIONS:

- To install the new grant-funded Arc Eye Camera System at the Collections Resource Center, we had a 32' x 32' section of new epoxy flooring installed in car storage for the photo stage. Electrical upgrades were also made, including three 20-amp circuits to support the lighting for the photo system.
- We replaced all four chiller coils at the Collections Resource Center for the air conditioning system.
- We also implemented a new digital and “smart” HVAC controls system to better regulate the temperature and, more importantly, humidity. As a result, we are no longer dependent on several dehumidifiers throughout the warm weather months.
- DTE Energy worked over the summer months on infrastructure for new control boxes at both the Detroit Historical Museum and Detroit Public Library, which impacted access to Kirby Street and left us with five new control boxes anchored on the west side of the museum’s lawn.
- In a partnership with Wayne State University, the Detroit Historical Museum was the first to receive outdoor community Wi-Fi as part of the C&IT Cultural Center Wi-Fi project. It is available on *Legends Plaza*, wrapping around to the Kirby entrance.
- The personal lift in the *America’s Motor City* exhibition was repaired for visitor use.
- All stairwells at the Detroit Historical Museum were repainted.
- The rear loading dock lift at the Detroit Historical Museum was repaired to make it easier to load in larger artifacts.
- After enduring two floods in 2021, the flooring in the dentist’s office in the *Streets of Old Detroit* was replaced, the carpet in the *Glancy Trains* was removed, both the *Boom Town* exhibition and *Brewing in Detroit* exhibition were de-installed and repaired twice, with AV getting replaced once. During this time, the wood flooring in the *Streets* became loose and needed repair. In all, the lower level was patched and repaired over the late Summer and early Fall.
- The roof at the Dossin was replaced, and the Dossin parking lot was repaved and re-striped.
- An all-new AV system was installed in DeRoy Hall, offering new functionality and up-to-date controls.
- We secured a new recycling contract with DPW Recycling through the City of Detroit.
- We signed a contract with Infiniti to begin work on a new security system plan for both museums and the CRC. This would include new cameras, new intercom systems, and a new monitoring company.



Climate control improved at the Collections Resource Center with the installation of new HVAC controls and chiller coils.



Joel Stone’s history of the Society was published by Wayne State University Press in December 2021.



The Detroit Historical Museum’s loading dock lift was repaired and used to move large artifacts like the Hudson’s delivery wagon.

DEVELOPMENT:

- We introduced The Century Club, a temporary committee whose purpose is to raise and provide supplemental operational funding for the Detroit Historical Society, pending the outcome of a millage proposal that will be presented to Oakland County and Wayne County residents in 2024. The Century Club raised \$400,000 in FY22.
- The quest to create The Century Club allowed us to convert prospects to donors and to reengage existing donors. To date, 50 people are part of this committee, which we have renamed The Next Century Club, as we are now working toward our next 100 years of operation.
- John W. Stroh III and Vivian Day Stroh, legacy owners of the Stroh Brewing Company, made a gift of \$200,000 to offset the curating, cataloging, and creation of an exhibit on the Stroh Brewing Company.
- Our Annual Fund hit an all-time high of \$67,000. This is 177% of goal, surpassing our budgeted goal for the year and for the last six fiscal years.

RETAIL AND VISITOR SERVICES:

- We continued to focus on partnerships that make Society merchandise available throughout the Metro area and making our online store as easy and safe to use as possible. These efforts, along with clever merchandising and a unique product mix, helped our stores finish the year at 215% of goal, their most profitable year in decades.
- New products help customers celebrate the Detroit they remember from their youth. Hudson's shopping bags, Stroh's merchandise, Farmer Jack t-shirts, one-of-a-kind sports pieces, and everything auto-related has made the Detroit Historical Museum Store a popular stop for unique Detroit merchandise.
- The Society worked hard to support and celebrate its Visitor Experience staff, hoping to achieve a stable and enthusiastic corps of associates to provide service to our visitors when they come to our museums.
- Over the past year we have improved retention, added employees, and successfully promoted several staffers to leadership positions, stabilizing this essential workforce.

MEMBERSHIP:

- A new affinity group joined the Detroit Historical Society: Friends of Historic Hamtramck Stadium. This group brought with them new members, programming at Historic Hamtramck Stadium, and partnership on a refreshed Negro Leagues exhibition in *Center Stage* within the *Allesee Gallery*.
- For the third year in a row, Detroit Historical Society introduced new membership benefits. In FY22, we expanded the free parking benefit, applying it to more membership levels, and restored subscriptions to the beloved *Telescope* magazine for our Friends of the Dossin Great Lakes Museum affinity group members.
- We also added a second reciprocal benefit that offers new and existing members free admission and discounts at many wonderful institutions through the National Association of Reciprocal Membership (NARM) program.
- We welcomed 2,314 new members and hosted 10 member receptions this year.



We accepted a donation of thousands of items from the Stroh Brewery Collection, as well as a gift to fund staff to process and store the material.



Limited edition items like our 2021 Holiday ornament sold well in our museum stores.

COLLECTIONS & DIGITIZATION:

- Collections video and images were licensed in feature documentaries including *Boblo Boats: A Tale of Two Sisters*, *Gradually, Then Suddenly*, *God Said Give 'em Drum Machines*, and *The Rebellious Life of Rosa Parks* and television projects like A&E's *Janet* and Starz's *BMF*. This revenue stream brought in \$43,120.
- There were 100,000+ searches in our online database for images, objects, and general reference material this year—a sizable jump over traffic in previous years. The audience for our YouTube channel continues to grow as well with 1.4 million+ lifetime views and 55,000+ hours watched this year.
- We created promotional videos and video materials for exhibits including *Body By Fisher* and *Hudson's Holidays*, as well as a display about Detroit jingles from the 1970s and 80s.
- We received grants from Dunning Foundation and Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan to support the Arc Eye artifact photography system installation and grants from the DTE and Flagstar Foundations for staffing support to photograph our automobile collection.
- IMLS funded photography of the furniture, transportation (non-automotive), and maritime model collections using Arc Eye System.
- We digitized historical resources for community partners including two large collections of AV material from Marygrove College, the Defining Detroit and Contemporary American Author lecture Series. In a separate partnership with Detroit's Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Corp., we helped train residents to collect oral histories about their neighborhood. This project also included the documenting and proper storage of nearly 500 artifacts collected with help from the neighborhood group.
- We took a donation of approximately 3,500 artifacts from the Stroh Brewery Collection. This collection of Detroit breweriana was in a private collection held by the company until February 2022, when 2,500 artifacts and close to 1,000 film reels/tapes were transferred to the Society. The donation of artifacts came with support for two two-year staff positions to process and store the material.
- We facilitated on-site, hands-on learning opportunities for eight college students at the Collections Resource center. Each contributed to the ongoing collection-wide inventory.
- We took 4,000+ new artifacts into the collection this year (apart from the Stroh donation). Highlights include: large decorative vase from Grande Ballroom; a "Detroit vs. Covid-19" facemask; a deck chair from the *Greater Detroit*; among many others.



The Arc Eye Camera System was installed at the Collections Resource center to produce high-resolution 360 degree images of our large artifacts.

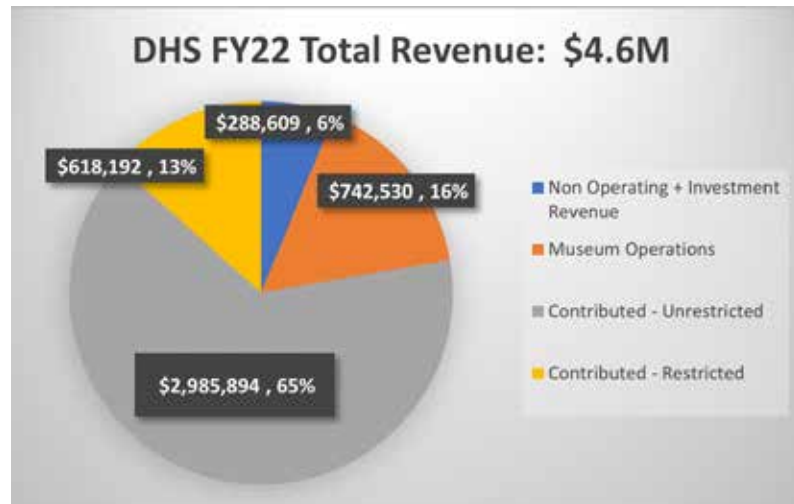


Ship models were repaired and prepped for display in advance of the *Maritime Miniatures* exhibition.

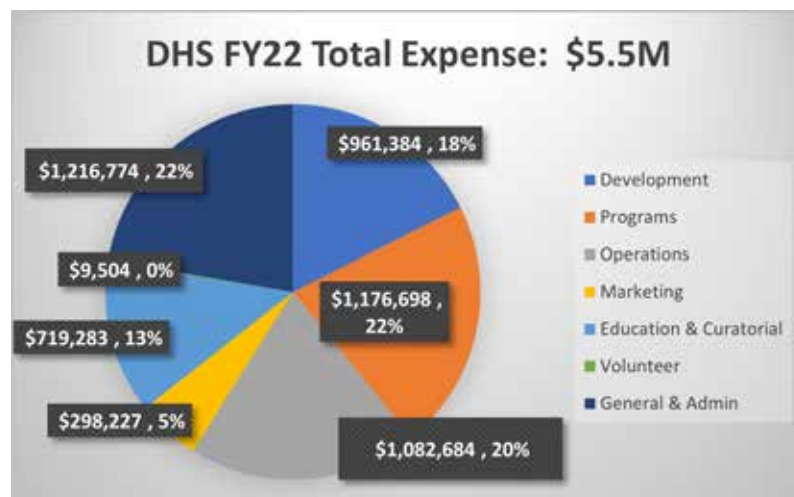
DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Combined Revenue and Expense information for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2022.

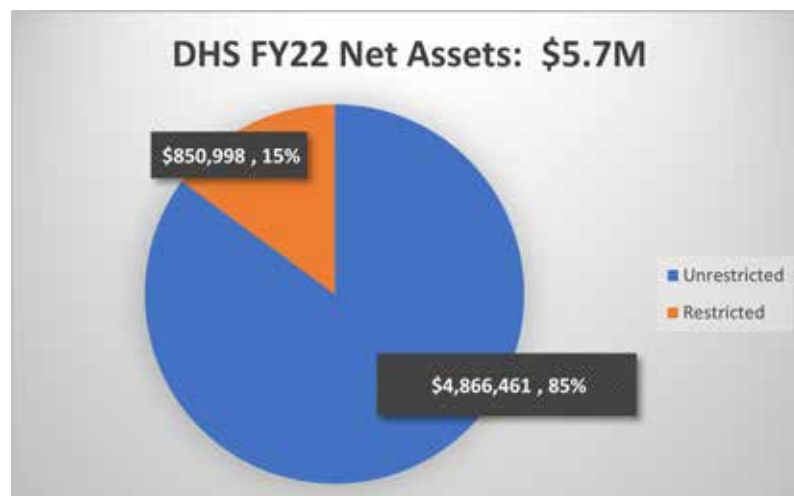
REVENUE



EXPENSES



NET ASSETS



GOVERNMENT, CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION DONORS

\$1,000,000+

City of Detroit Finance
Department

\$100,000-\$499,000

AAA Club of Michigan
Bank of America
Davidson Foundation
Day-Stroh Charitable Trust
Gilbert Family Foundation
Hudson-Webber Foundation
Michigan Arts and Culture
Council
Quicken Loans
Toyota North America

\$25,000-\$99,000

Community Foundation for
Southeast Michigan
Flagstar Foundation
Friends of Historic
Hamtramck Stadium
General Society of Colonial
Wars
H.W. Kaufman Group
JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A.
Kresge Foundation
Lonyo Family Endowment
Michigan Humanities Council
Midtown Detroit Inc
Milner Hotels Foundation
National Endowment for the
Humanities
Oliver Dewey Marcks
Foundation
Peslar Foundation
PNC

Polk Family Fund
PVS Chemicals, Inc.
Rockefeller Philanthropy
Advisors (aka
Philanthropic Collab)
The Fred A. and Barbara M.
Erb Family Foundation

\$10,000-\$24,999

Bernard & Nina Kent
Philanthropic Fund
Computech Corporation
DTE Energy Company
Dykema Gossett PLLC
Elizabeth, Allan & Warren
Shelden Fund
Huebner Foundation
Jaffe, Raitt, Heuer & Weiss
Penske Corporation
Penske Foundation, Inc
The Sidney E. Frank
Foundation

\$5,000-\$9,999

Ascension Health Ministry
SVC
Bingham Family Foundation
Burns & Wilcox
Detroit Industrial School
Foundation
George Johnson & Company
James & Cathy Deutchman
Philanthropic Fund
Knudsen Family Fund
Nicholson Family Fund
Shaevsky Family Foundation
St John Hospital
Tito's Handmade Vodka
Warner Norcross + Judd
Wolverine Packing Company

\$2,500-\$4,999

Cathy and Bob Anthony Fund
Honigman LLP
Japan Business Society of
Detroit Foundation
LAZ Parking
Thomas Tipi Irrevocable
Trust
Salome E and Jonathan T
Walton Family Fund
Gail and Lois Warden Fund
Young Woman's Home
Association

\$1,000-\$2,499

Lynn & Paul Alandt
Foundation
Applebaum Family
Foundation
Charles B. Bohn Fund
Bob, Mary Ann and Meredith
Bury Charitable Fund
Children's Foundation
Cohn Family Philanthropic
Fund
Kenneth R & Valerie L
Dabrowski Charitable
Foundation
The Debbie and John Erb
Family Fund
Detroit Regional Chamber
Exxon Mobil Foundation
Benson & Edith Ford Fund
Jean Wright and Joseph L.
Hudson Jr. Fund
Marjorie and Maxwell Jospey
Foundation
Meijer
Millennium Business Systems

Misuraca Family Fund
MJS Packaging
Sylvia Pevin and George Pevin
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Prismatic Foundation
The Elmira L. Rhein Family
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Sandy Family Foundation
A. Paul and Carol C. Schaap
Fund
Vesco Oil Corporation
Gordon H. Ward Trust
Wilkinson Foundation

\$1-\$999

The Alexis Company
Amazon Smile Foundation
The Boston Consulting Group,
Inc
Detroit Athletic Club
Eugene and Mary Anne Gargaro
Fund
Global Giving
Gornick Fund
Greenstone's Fine Jewelry
Thomas and Elizabeth Griffith
Fund
Homelight.com
Joseph and Jennifer Hudson
Parke Fund
National Organization of
Minority Architects
Network for Good
Priced Right Printing
SAY Detroit
Neal F & Esther Zalenko
Philanthropic Fund



Dresses and accessories from the MGM movie *RESPECT* were on display over the summer at the Detroit Historical Museum.



Michigan History Day returned in-person at the Detroit Historical Museum, with 80 participants from six schools in our district.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

\$100,000+

Sandy and Mimi McMillan
John Stroh and Vivian Day
Stroh

\$50,000-\$99,999

Kevin and Catharine
Broderick
Douglas and Diane Dossin
Drew and Karen Peslar
Bobbi and Stephen Polk

\$25,000-\$49,999

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The iconic Fisher stage coach on display at the Detroit Historical Museum.

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Robert Majeski
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 Paul Zoltowski
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The National Organization of Minority Architects exhibition coincided with the group's 2021 annual convention, which was held in Detroit.



Exiled in Motown featured an installation of tsuru - paper cranes - in the Community Gallery.

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We hosted 36 Behind the Scenes Tours this year, including tours at six new sites.



Illustrator Isabel Clare Paul and historian Tim Retzloff teamed up to create the comic book *Come Out! In Detroit*, which told the story of Detroit's first gay pride parade and was featured in our *Auditorium Showcase*.



Kids of all ages enjoyed traditional favorites like *The Streets of Old Detroit* and *Glancy Trains*.



A Cadillac with a "Body by Fisher" on-hand for the opening day of the exhibition.



MISSION

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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