

Minnesota Humanities Center to Announce Recipient of the Ruth & Ray Reister Award for Historical Contributions to the Humanities on October 20

For Immediate Release

October 14, 2026 – ST. PAUL, MN – Seven Minnesotans have been named finalists for the 2026 Ruth & Ray Reister Award for Historical Contributions to the Humanities (Reister Award). The awardee will be announced at the [Minnesota Humanities Center's \(MHC\) Annual Event](#) on October 20, 2026 at the Minnesota History Center.

The seven Reister Award finalists are as follows:

- Pam Brunfelt (Ely) — Historian and educator recognized for decades of research, teaching, and preservation of Minnesota's Iron Range labor, political, and immigrant history.
- Penny Kagigebe (Detroit Lakes) — White Earth Ojibwe artist and curator recognized for preserving traditional Ojibwe arts and elevating Two-Spirit histories through the *Queering Indigeneity* exhibition.
- Dr. Rose Miron (Woodbury) — Historian and archival leader recognized for award-winning Indigenous history scholarship and helping Tribal Nations reclaim and preserve their historical records.
- Dr. Anton Treuer (Bemidji) — Historian, author, and educator recognized for his Ojibwe history scholarship, leadership in language revitalization, and efforts to make Indigenous history accessible.
- Dr. Artika R. Tyner (Saint Paul) — Author, educator, and community historian recognized for preserving Rondo's history and elevating African American voices through storytelling, publications, and education.
- Karen Sieber (Saint Paul) — Historian and educator recognized for uncovering Minnesota's Underground Railroad connections, documenting overlooked African American history, and preserving historic places.
- Mai Vang Huizel (Apple Valley) — Founder and executive director of the Hmong Museum, recognized for preserving Hmong history through community-centered exhibitions, intergenerational storytelling, and education.

The Reister Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the understanding, preservation, interpretation, and public appreciation of Minnesota history. The awardee will be officially announced at the MHC Annual Event on October 20, and a media alert will be sent the next day on October 21.

“History is more than a record of what happened. It shapes how we understand our communities, our relationships, and the decisions we make today,” said MHC CEO Kevin Lindsey, “These seven finalists are helping Minnesotans encounter histories that deserve to be known, remembered, and shared.”

The Reister Award honors the legacy of Ruth A. Reister (1936–2015) and Raymond A. Reister (1929–2005). Together, Ruth and Ray shared a deep commitment to history, education, and community engagement. Raymond was a respected attorney and community advocate whose contributions extended well beyond his legal career. He served on the board of the Minnesota Humanities Commission (now MHC), as Treasurer of the Minnesota Historical Society, and as Vice President of the Minneapolis Athenaeum, along with other arts and civic organizations. Ruth was an accomplished leader

in law, finance, and public service who held senior positions at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She also served on the boards of Gustavus Adolphus College and the Minnesota Historical Society.

A bequest from Ruth's estate established an endowment at MHC in 2016, making the award possible and carrying forward their shared legacy. Learn more about the Reister Award at <https://www.mnhum.org/program/ruth-ray-reister-award/>.

About the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC)

The Minnesota Humanities Center is a nonprofit which aims to create a just society that is curious, connected, and compassionate. We do this by bringing people together to share experiences and stories, working alongside partner organizations through grantmaking, co-created programs, and shared events. MHC also operates a full-service event center in a historic building on St. Paul's East Side. We believe that humanities live in the stories we tell, the histories that we confront, and the conversations that we are willing to have across our differences. MHC is funded by generous donors, the people of Minnesota who voted the Legacy Amendment's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund into law in 2008, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, which helped establish MHC in 1971. More information is available at mnhum.org.

About Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment

The Minnesota Legislature passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment) in 2008 to ensure clean water, preserve opportunities for Minnesotans to enjoy nature, parks, and trails, and to appreciate arts and culture that exists within the State. The Legacy Amendment increases the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent to fund four distinct funds to achieve the goals of the Legacy Amendment. – 19.75% of the funding raised under the Legacy Amendment is dedicated to the Legacy arts and cultural heritage fund.

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Media Contact: Ali Syverson, Director of Strategic Communications, ali@mnhum.org & 651-772-4295;
Reister Award Contact: Casey DeMarais, casey@mnhum.org & 651-772-4278