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Harriet Wilson Project Garners Another National Award

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DURHAM, N.H. - The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) recently presented JerriAnne Boggis and the Milford-based Harriet Wilson Project an Award of Merit for their leadership in history preservation. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards, now in its 63rd year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

The Harriet Wilson Project was formed by Boggis in 2002 to raise awareness, educate the public, and students in particular of the role that Harriet E. Wilson, a Milford, N.H., native, played in American history by being the first black woman to publish a novel. Wilson's book, *Our Nig, or Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*, was published in 1859 and addressed issues of gender, race, class and poverty from Wilson's unique perspective.

The women of The Harriet Wilson Project toured the region hosting book and panel discussions which featured national and international scholars, gave presentations to fraternal and civic organizations, appeared on local radio and TV programs, hosted renowned guest speakers and raised funds for the creation of a full-size bronze statue of Wilson. Most recently, Boggis, Barbara White, and Eve Raimon edited a collection of essays entitled *Harriet Wilson's New England: Race, Writing and Region*, published by the University Press of New England. This collection is the first devoted to Wilson and her novel. It includes essays that seek to understand Wilson within New England and the area as it might have appeared to Wilson and her contemporaries. Contributors include prominent historians, literary critics, psychologists, librarians and cultural diversity activists.

The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards not only honor significant achievement in the field of state and local history, but also brings public recognition of the opportunities for small and large organizations, institutions, and programs to make contributions in this arena. For more information about the Leadership in History Awards, contact AASLH at 615-320-3203, or go to www.aaslh.org.

The American Association for State and Local History is a not-for-profit professional organization of individuals and institutions working to preserve and promote history. From its headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, AASLH provides leadership, service, and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful in American society.

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