



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Stanley-Whitman House Receives Two 2023 Awards of Merit from CLHO** *Connecticut League of History Organizations Awards Museum for a Publication and an Original Play*

FARMINGTON, CT (April 10, 2023) – Stanley-Whitman House, a ca. 1720 National Historic Landmark located in the historic village of Farmington, was recently given the distinction of receiving not one but two 2023 Awards of Merit from the Connecticut League of History Organizations.

Andres A. Verzosa, Executive Director and Curator of Stanley-Whitman House, commented, “We are so excited to announce these awards. The Museum is lucky to have such dedicated volunteers, staff, and community members who come together to truly bring history to life in visual, tactile, theatrical, and intellectual ways that appeal to all ages and interests. Like everyone, we struggled during COVID to keep programming accessible and relevant, to keep energies and spirits up – and thanks to so many, and our output rose to the occasion.”

The first award is for ***Memento Mori, Farmington, Connecticut – Remember Death***, the Museum’s first book and publication about this ancient burial ground authored by Kate Linsley-Rodgers with research organized by Betty Coykendall, Sherra Palmer, and the late Paul Kramer.

“This project went far beyond the usual cemetery tour,” Amrys O. Williams, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Connecticut League of History Organizations, included in her congratulatory letter. “It is a superb example of how to turn research by community volunteers into a well-crafted, well-written, well-documented publication. Beautiful, readable, and with a wide and inclusive range of topics and individuals covered, the book is an engaging history of colonial Farmington and a wonderful example of what engaged volunteers can achieve with support from a historic house museum.”

The second award was given for “The Last Night,” an original play commissioned and produced by the Museum’s Mary Barnes Society to mark the 360th anniversary of the end of the accusations, persecution, and hanging for witchcraft in the Connecticut Colony. Written and performed in a live staged reading by actors and authors Debra Walsh and Virginia Wolf, the play tells the compelling story of the accused Mary Barnes and Rebecca Greensmith. It dramatizes their last night together before being hanged for witchcraft crimes. Particularly striking to the awarding committee was “the play’s ability to help the audience connect

powerfully to events deep in the past.” In a letter of critical evaluation for the play, Historical Novelist and Scholar Beth Caruso stated, “This [play] was a bold move by the Stanley-Whitman House... most museums and historical societies may pay little attention to these important histories or shy away from them altogether. The histories were brought to life with compassion and nuance, provoking questions and discussion.”

The Mary Barnes Society at Stanley-Whitman House is dedicated to supporting the study of the Connecticut Witch Trials, aiming for a deeper understanding of the people and cultures of this seminal time. In March 2023, Andres Verzosa, on behalf of the Museum, its Board of Directors, and the Mary Barnes Society, submitted a letter of testimony to the Judiciary Committee regarding House Joint Resolution No. 34, Concerning Certain Witchcraft Convictions in Colonial Connecticut, in support of its proposal to see to the innocence and exoneration of at least thirty-four women and men, one of which was Mary Barnes, for the alleged crime of witchcraft in Colonial Connecticut.

CLHO’s annual Awards of Merit recognize excellence in preserving and interpreting history by individuals and organizations here in Connecticut. This work is made possible through partnerships with the Public History program at Central Connecticut State University and CT Humanities, with major funding from the CT Cultural Fund, provided by the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the Connecticut State Legislature, and administered by CT Humanities. This year’s awards ceremony will take place as part of CLHO’s Annual Business Meeting on Tuesday, April 18, at 5:00 pm in Davidson Hall at Central Connecticut State University. The event is free and open to the public and will be followed by a reception. For more information, visit <https://clho.org/event-5229282>.

Stanley-Whitman House, a National Historic Landmark, is a living history center and Museum that teaches through the collection, preservation, research, and dynamic interpretation of the history and culture of 17th- to 19th-Century Farmington, Connecticut. Visitors of all ages are encouraged to immerse themselves in history by doing, acting, questioning, and engaging in colonial life and the ideas that formed the foundation of that culture. The Museum facility is centered on a ca. 1720 house furnished with period antiques. Surrounding the house are period-raised bed gardens, an apple orchard, and heritage stone walls. The Museum manages Memento Mori, Farmington’s ancient burial ground on Main Street, Scott Swamp Cemetery on Route 6, and the Village Green, at the intersection of Routes 4 and 10. Stanley-Whitman House is partly supported by the Farmington Village Green and Library Association. Hours of operation are Wednesday through Saturday, 12:00 to 4:00 pm, and by appointment. The last tour leaves at 3:00 pm. For more information, visit <https://s-wh.org/>.

The **Connecticut League of History Organizations** builds connections among those who preserve and share the stories and objects of our past. For over 50 years, they have strengthened and sustained their members by sharing knowledge and experience and promoting best practices among museums, historical societies, and all who steward Connecticut’s heritage collections. Learn more by visiting <https://clho.org/>.