

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian



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In September 1987 Paul J. Scudiere, state historian, announced the initiation of the Albert Corey Award which thereafter every year would be given to one officially appointed local historian in the state. Dr. Albert Corey was at one time, the state historian who died back in the 1960s.

Nomination of local historians is invited from all regions of the state. The criteria for judging eligibility for the award emphasizes the activities of a community historian. To what extent does the individual serve as the historical conscience of the community? Examples of advocacy in the areas of historic preservation and conservation are considered, along with publications and public programs. What contributions has the local historian made to educating school children and adult learners about the history of the community? Has the local historian taken advantage of inservice educational opportunities to maintain a fresh perspective about the work of a historian, as well as learn new skills? This information along with letters of recommendation is evaluated during the selection process. A screening committee selected three candidates for the award. In turn the state historian makes the one final selection. This year the state historian chose Julia Bower Reinstein, historian for the Town of Cheektowaga to receive the Albert Corey Award. However, on a local note, we have been informed that Marsha DeFilipps, historian for the Town of Murray and Village of Holley was one of the top three considered by the state historian. Although Marsha did not receive the Albert Corey Award this year, it is none the less a distinguished honor to have been nominated and then to have been among the top three.

The idea of nominating Marsha for the award was conceived by Lysbeth Hoffman, Carlton historian and Delia Robinson, Gaines historian. In a support letter they noted: "Community involvement and support are her strong points. Marsha does not compete, but works with her peers, officials and community members for the advancement of local history and is most deserving of the Albert Cory Award.

"Marsha is, in our belief, a fine example of the True Historian. It is her life, that of her family who support her, and she lives her life in a manner of service to others."

Letters of support and nomination were also received from: James F. Scharping, OCAC deputy director; Charles H. Strong, mayor of Holley; James J. Piedimonte, Town of Murray supervisor; and yours truly, C.W. Lattin, county historian. All of these letters were full of praise and appreciation. Jim Scharping noted: "Marsha has the ability and agility to wear many hats dealing with items from

historical significance to fund raising activities, and lest the reader feels this is all she has to do, I hasten to add she is also a mother, wife, and an excellent seamstress...In my opinion a successful person possesses three qualities; a perceptive eye, a retentive memory, and the ability to get things done. Marsha has all three."

Also following are excerpts from the letter written by Charles Strong: "Prior to 1979 the Village of Holley had no historian, although it was a requirement. In 1979, the mayor at that time, Herman Vaughan, appointed Marsha. His appointment carried no salary, no benefits, and no expense money. A requirement had been met!

"In the same year the Town of Murray appointed her town historian. There was a small 'stipend' offered by the township.

"The course of action Marsha took was unbelievable. She set out to record the history of the Village of Holley and the Town of Murray. Her contacting area historians for advice and guidance gave her the necessary momentum to pick up historical pieces and put them into some semblance of order.

"It is impossible for me to list or describe the maneuverings of this lady...Finally, in 1987, the Village of Holley voted her a small stipend for services and expenses. Up to this point, aside from a small stipend from the Town of Murray, Marsha had made herself responsible for far too many costs. When asked why, she responded, 'My education in local history exceeds that of anyone else and a price cannot be put on that. I have gained more than any salary could purchase. Thank you.'

"I sincerely feel that the Albert Cory Award could not be awarded to anyone more dedicated, more beloved and more a part of our history than Marsha DeFilipps."

Recently Marsha was surprised at a meeting of the Holley-Murray Historical Society when she was presented with a packet of all the support letters of nomination. Supervisor Piedimonte was present and read his. He began by saying: "I am so pleased that Marsha DeFilipps is being nominated for the prestigious Albert Cory Award. I know of no one more deserving. I was delighted to recommend her as Town of Murray historian, and she has brought enthusiasm, achievement and excitement to that post."

The accompanying photo shows Delia Robinson presenting Marsha with the support metal.

Over the past 10 years Marsha has had many accomplishments to the benefit of her community. I would only add congratulations to the testimony of others above and simply say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."