

MSU MUSEUM SEEKS '10 HERITAGE AWARD, ARTS APPRENTICESHIP NOMINATIONS

November 30th Application Deadline

Honoring individuals who continue traditions with excellence is the focus of two annual programs coordinated by the Michigan State University Museum: the Michigan Heritage Awards (MHA) Program, and the Michigan Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (MTAAP).

Nominations for 2010 awards and apprenticeships are due Monday, Nov. 30, 2009.

2010 Michigan Heritage Awards: Since 1985, the MSU Museum's Michigan Traditional Arts Program has --through its Michigan Heritage Awards -- honored the achievements of Michigan artists for traditions in family and community. The awards recognize these traditions in the areas of performance, material culture and community leadership. Previous awardees receiving the 2009 MHA awards were: Willard Finch of Stockbridge for decorative architectural painting; Les Ross Sr. of Marquette for Finnish "lumberjack" style harmonica playing.

"The attention and honor extended to these artists through the Michigan Heritage Awards is important not only to them but to all of us who cherish the state's cultural heritage," explains LuAnne Kozma, assistant curator of folk arts at the MSU Museum and coordinator of the MHA program. "We seek nominations from all over the state so that the award program continues to reflect the great diversity of skills, ethnicities and backgrounds of Michiganders," she adds.

2010 Michigan Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program: The Michigan Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program supports the continuation of traditional folk arts practiced in Michigan that are learned informally from one another in small groups and families -- ranging from decoy duck carving and birch bark canoe making to storytelling, mehendi (henna) art application, and regional and ethnic foodways. A master works with an apprentice artist in the same community, passing on the skills and knowledge about a particular traditional art. The Apprenticeship Program awards a stipend in support of the instruction time the master artist spends with the apprentice.

"Like its natural resources, Michigan's cultural traditions are a treasured resource to be nurtured for future generations, which is why the Apprenticeship program is so successful in providing incentives to traditional artists to pursue their art and pass on these skills to others," says Kozma. "Many master and apprentice teams tell us that their apprenticeship was one of the most meaningful times of their lives, providing the opportunity and the means to pass on a living tradition to someone who will continue the tradition as well," she adds.

Because of Michigan's unique natural and physical elements, together with its incredible diversity of social, occupational, recreational, ethnic, and religious traditions, it is no

wonder that the state hosts thousands of individuals and businesses who produce a wide variety of crafts, according to Kozma. Some of these crafts are unparalleled in their form, technical mastery, and creativity; some have deep meanings to the communities from which they spring; all contribute to the economy of the state.

The National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs fund these traditional arts programs. For information on the Michigan Heritage Award or Apprenticeship programs, contact Kozma at the MSU Museum, at (517) 353-5526.

A gallery of past awardees is online at http://museum.msu.edu/s-program/mh_awards/mha.html. Heritage Award winners and MTAAP masters and apprenticeships are featured in a special exhibition at the MSU Museum, "Michigan Artists: Passing on Traditions," and are recognized at the MSU Museum's annual Great Lakes Folk Festival in East Lansing each August. Many of these tradition-bearers also demonstrate their skills and/or perform at the festival in workshops and showcases.

Nomination forms are available on line at <http://www.museum.msu.edu/s-program/mtap/Programs&Services>.

The MSU Museum's Michigan Traditional Arts Program promotes cross-cultural understanding in a diverse society through documentation, preservation and presentation of the state's folk arts and folk life. The MSU Museum is located on West Circle Drive, next to Beaumont Tower on the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing, and is the state's first Smithsonian Institution affiliate. One of the oldest museums in the Midwest, the MSU Museum recently marked 150 years of discovery.