DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCES MAJOR GIFT IN SUPPORT OF COVID-19 STORY COLLECTING PROJECT

DETROIT - Sixty days ago, as Detroit began what would become a deadly struggle with Covid-19, the Detroit Historical Society began a contemporary collecting effort to capture the stories and artifacts from this historic pandemic. DETROIT RESPONDS: Stories from the time of Covid-19 is a present day effort to collect the stories and artifacts that reflect the myriad perspectives and experiences of this historic time. A wide-reaching and comprehensive oral history project, DETROIT RESPONDS aims to collect real-time personal recollections from the full spectrum of people experiencing the pandemic in metropolitan Detroit.

Joel Stone, Detroit Historical Society Senior Curator, emphasized the importance of timing for the project: “Nothing compares to the raw, emotional impact of stories captured in the moment. Throughout history, it is the real time accounts of historic events that have been irreplaceable to future generations. As Detroit’s Historical Society, we take seriously our duty to collect the stories and artifacts that will help tomorrow’s Detroiters learn from our experiences during this time.”

Support for this critical contemporary collections effort has been provided by Chip and Sarah McClure. Sarah serves on the Board of Trustees for the Detroit Historical Society. She said “The Covid-19 pandemic affects everyone, cutting across social, economic and political lines. From healthcare heroes to business leaders, elected officials, and residents throughout the region, everyone has a story to tell. Chip and I are supporting the project to ensure that the Detroit Historical Society has the resources it needs to be truly inclusive and expansive as it collects the many perspectives of our region.”

“We were made for times like this,” added Detroit Historical Society President and CEO, Elana Rugh. "Time is of the essence with contemporary collecting efforts and we are particularly grateful to Chip and Sarah for stepping up to provide real-time support, since traditional partners likely wouldn’t have had the flexibility to provide funding so quickly. Actually, our Board has been supportive of many of the new initiatives that we’ve introduced during this period and we hope to match their enthusiasm with gifts from our traditional partners as time allows.”

Since its founding in 1921, the Detroit Historical Society has relied on its Board of Trustees and executive leadership team to ensure excellence in all of its organizational activities. The Society entered the new decade with a renewed commitment to serve its community and to preserve the region’s history, while looking forward to its 100th anniversary next year. The global pandemic has provided a new focus for its critical efforts to preserve Detroit’s history.

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The Detroit Historical Society is a private, nonprofit organization located in Midtown, the heart of Detroit’s cultural center. Founded in 1921, its mission is to tell Detroit’s stories and why they matter. Today, the Society operates the Detroit Historical Museum and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. In addition, the Society is responsible for the conservation and preservation of more than 250,000 artifacts that represent three centuries of our region’s rich history. Through its museum exhibits, school tour programs, community-based programs and history-themed outreach efforts, the Society serves more than 150,000 people annually. For more information on the Detroit Historical Society, visit detroithistorical.org.

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