



MINNESOTA  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

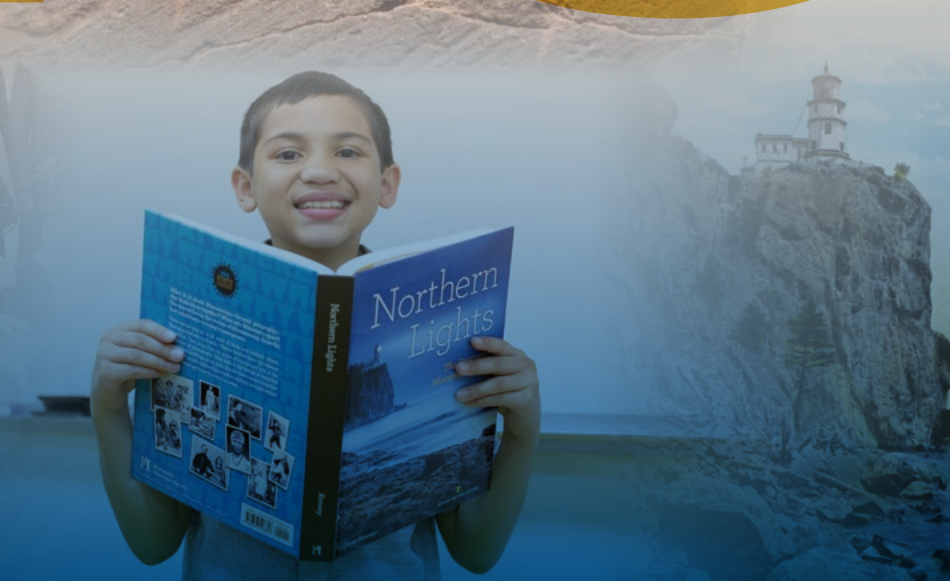
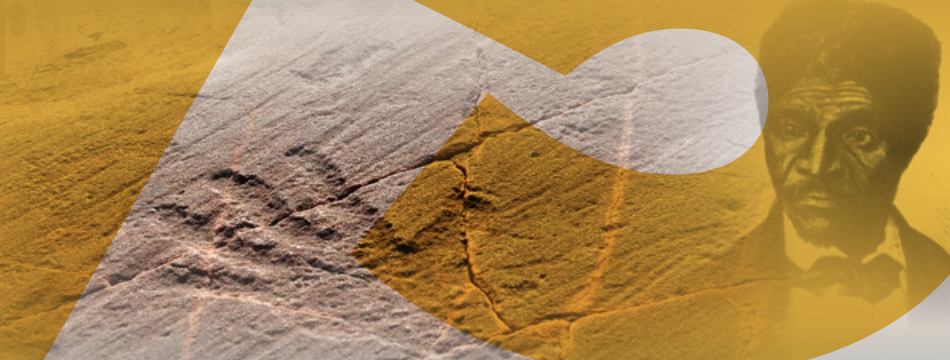
# MNHS ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2024

## Minnesota Historical Society

THE QUARTERLY OF THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

547 FALL 2024





## A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO

History has a whole lot more to do with the future than it does with the past.

These words are particularly appropriate as MNHS marks our 175th anniversary in 2024. Milestones like these often create a sense of nostalgia, but we must not lose our focus on the future.

The mission of MNHS is to serve all the people of Minnesota by creating powerful engagement with history to cultivate curiosity and foster a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed society. There are clear examples of how MNHS has moved the needle toward our mission over the past year, and what we can learn from these experiences moving forward.

Historic Fort Snelling welcomed a new exhibit that was six years in the making. It seemed overwhelming to tell the comprehensive history of this site, as a place that dates back more than 10,000 years and means many different things to many different people. Instead, *Many Voices, Many Stories, One Place* uses individuals' personal stories to share the complex history of Historic Fort Snelling and Bdote. There are stories of enslaved people, everyday soldiers, diplomats, Tribal leaders, women, children, and veterans. This form of storytelling invokes empathy, and the lessons learned through creating and opening this exhibit will carry us forward.

In an outstanding year for MNHS Press, one book stands out for the way it resonates with readers. *Dear Jacob: A Mother's Journey of Hope* made up more than half of new book sales and 20% of overall sales for MNHS Press in FY24. The memoir by Patty Wetterling and co-author Joy Baker poignantly tells the story of a mother, a family, and a community who never gave up hope for their kidnapped son, Jacob. Readers identify with a mother's love, despite her situation being one they will likely never experience. Books like this one will forever have a place in Minnesota publishing.

This summer, we launched the MNHS 175 History Hunt, which encouraged users to dive into our state's history with tasks such as visiting historic sites, reading MNopedia articles, and exploring Minnesota communities. Minnesotans completed more than 15,000 tasks through the app, deepening their understanding of our state's history. Among the highlights, nearly 300 people visited a MNHS-managed historic site for the first time, and more than 80% said their appreciation and awareness of MNHS increased because of the History Hunt. Even before the hunt had finished, our staff was already thinking of ways to expand on this format in the years ahead.

All of us at MNHS owe an enormous amount of gratitude to the people of Minnesota who make our work possible. Thank you to our members and donors for your support. We also thank the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, our Executive Council, visitors, legislators, employees, volunteers, interns, and all the people of Minnesota, for your commitment to MNHS and our mission.



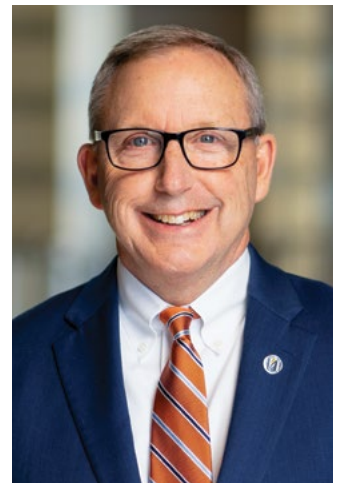
**Judge Peter M. Reyes, Jr.**  
President



**Kent Whitworth**  
Director and CEO



Judge Peter M. Reyes, Jr.



Kent Whitworth

**Top to bottom, left to right:**

A draft horse experience at Forest History Center;  
History walking tour participants at the James J. Hill House;  
Authors Joy Baker (left) and Patty Wetterling (right);  
Visitors on the stairs down to Lake Superior at Split Rock Lighthouse;  
Entrance to *Many Voices, Many Stories, One Place* at Historic Fort Snelling;  
Opening of the *Reframing Our Stories* exhibit at the Minnesota History Center.

MORE THAN  
**886,000**

**VISITORS EXPLORED  
MNHS SITES IN FY24**

Mill City Museum, Minnesota History Center, and Split Rock Lighthouse were the most-visited sites.



**328**  
NORTH STAR  
CIRCLE MEMBERS

**\$11M**

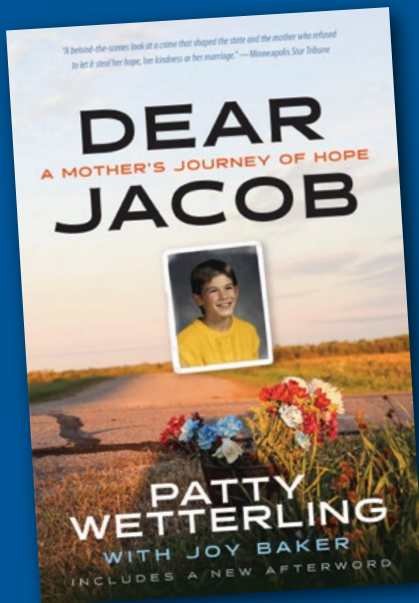
**RECEIVED IN GIFTS  
AND PLEDGES**

2 additional endowed positions creating long-term sustainability for our workforce.

**20TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE LEGACY SOCIETY**

**\$1 million+**

**IN PLANNED GIFT  
COMMITMENTS**



**3 RECORD-BREAKING YEARS**  
in a row for MNHS Press

NEARLY

**165,000**

**PRINT AND EBOOKS SOLD**  
a 35% increase over last year

**19**

**NEW TITLES  
PUBLISHED IN FY24**

*Dear Jacob: A Mother's Journey of Hope* has sold more than 25,000 copies.



**815**

**VOLUNTEERS  
LOGGED MORE THAN**

**19,000 HOURS**

**IN SUPPORT OF MNHS**



**19,001**

**MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS**

a 4% increase over FY23



**4.9 million**

**VISITS TO MNHS.ORG**

More than 140,000 unique visitors viewed the webpage for *The Life and Art of Charles M. Schulz*



More than **ONE MILLION** pages of current and historic newspapers were added to the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub.

**MORE THAN**  
**6.6 million**  
**PAGES NOW AVAILABLE**



**MORE THAN**  
**700**  
**NEW ACQUISITIONS**  
to MNHS manuscripts, fine art, 3D, sound/visual and maps/rare books

### Carver County Veteran Registry

the highest obligation and privilege of citizenship is that of bearing arms for one's country.  
- Gen. George S. Patton Jr.



**\$7.8 million**  
**PROVIDED BY THE ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND FOR 174 LEGACY GRANTS**

▶ The Carver County Historical Society veteran's display now includes a searchable digital touchscreen database programmed and designed by a local Minnesota company.

A helmet worn by Charles Lindbergh is among the **17 3D OBJECTS ADDED TO MNHS COLLECTIONS.** Lindbergh wore the flight cap during a 1933 North Atlantic survey with his wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, that lasted five months and covered nearly 30,000 miles over four continents.



Charles Lindbergh Flight Cap (c. 1933) <2023.74.1>

**MN**  
**OPEDIA**

**MORE THAN**  
**413,000**  
**USERS VISITED**  
**930,000**  
**PAGES ON MNOPEDIA IN FY24.**



**50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL HISTORY DAY!**

**NEARLY**  
**17,000**  
**STUDENTS**  
from around Minnesota participated.

**64**  
**STUDENTS**  
represented Minnesota in the national competition. Those students were awarded 7 medals, 3 finalists, and 7 honorable mentions.

Through a sponsorship from the Shakopee Mdwakanton Sioux Community, MNHS distributed thousands of free resources to Minnesota educators that introduce Dakota and Ojibwe culture, history, and arts. The free resources were all claimed within the first SEVEN hours!



## THE LIFE & ART OF CHARLES M. SCHULZ

Charles M. Schulz is widely recognized as one of St. Paul's most celebrated sons. Schulz helped brighten the world for more than five decades with his iconic *Peanuts* comic strip, first debuting on October 2, 1950.

By introducing lovable characters including Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and the rest of the *Peanuts* gang to the world, Schulz used his comics to explore the emotional territory of friendship, faith, tolerance, and disappointment. Opened to the public in July 2023, *The Life and Art of Charles M. Schulz* exhibit gave Minnesota History Center visitors a unique and intimate look inside the world of Minnesota's most famous cartoonist.

The traveling exhibit was curated by the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center in Santa Rosa, California and also spotlighted Schulz's time in the Twin Cities using memorabilia from MNHS's collections as well as unique pieces from local collectors. The exhibit highlighted Schulz's personal history and the inspiration behind the beloved *Peanuts* cast, following Schulz from his Minnesota roots to his later years in California and tracking the development of the unique characters that make up the world of *Peanuts*.

In addition to the action inside the gallery, Minnesota History Center staff organized numerous *Peanuts*-inspired public programs, including the powerful panel discussion, "Franklin: The Legacy of *Peanuts*' First Black Character."

*The Life and Art of Charles M. Schulz* helped boost attendance at the Minnesota History Center. More than 137,000 members, non-members, and field trip participants attended over the run of the exhibit, up 28% over the same period the prior year. It was a fan favorite with museum guests of all ages, from young children soaking in the bright colors and creating their own comic strips on the drawing tables to grandparents reminiscing about the characters who helped shape their own childhoods.





Taletta, Edric, Caroline, and Amy from DeLaSalle High School were joined by several of their peers at the 2024 National History Day National Contest. They showed support at their judging interviews by attending and providing encouragement throughout the week.

## NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

It's a special year for National History Day. The program that inspires students across the country to explore historical topics celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2024. And since this year also marks the 35th anniversary of our involvement in the program, it's a special year for MNHS as well.

National History Day is an educational competition that encourages students in grades 6-12 to study history through in-depth research and creative projects. Students choose a topic that relates to an annual theme, research that topic, and present their research in one of five presentation categories: papers, exhibits, documentaries, performances, and websites. In the process, they gain critical thinking and research skills, college readiness and a deeper appreciation for history overall.

This year's theme was "Turning Points in History." Sixty-four Minnesota students were named winners at the state competition and were eligible to represent the state at National History Day in Washington, DC. These students did Minnesota proud, taking home an array of awards, including seven medals, three finalists, and seven honorable mentions.

For the past 35 years, the Minnesota Historical Society has been a proud partner of National History Day, supporting its mission to foster historical research and education among students. This anniversary year provides an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to this impactful program and to underscore the broader significance of history in shaping informed and engaged communities. Through initiatives like National History Day, MNHS continues to promote a deeper understanding of the past, fostering critical thinking and intellectual growth in future generations.



Layne from Byron Middle School was ready to perform his project to judges on "The New York Newsie Strike of 1899." He received an Honorable Mention for his performance.



Sammy, Dylan, Sam, and Tyler from Sunrise Park Middle School in White Bear Lake in front of their exhibit, "Brown v. Board of Education," which was featured at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History during the 2024 National History Day National Contest.



Anna from East High School in Duluth, with her parents and adviser, in front of her exhibit, "Ms. Magazine: A Turning Point in Feminist Media." At the 2024 National History Day National Contest Anna was able to interview the president of the Feminist Majority Foundation, the parent organization that publishes Ms. Magazine.



## MANY VOICES, MANY STORIES, ONE PLACE AT HISTORIC FORT SNELLING

Historic Fort Snelling is truly a site of converging histories. It is one of the most pivotal places in Minnesota's history, and even our country's history.

*Many Voices, Many Stories, One Place* opened in the Huss Gallery in September 2023, the final piece of a two-year revitalization project at Historic Fort Snelling. The exhibit shares thousands of years of complex history from the perspectives of dozens of real people whose lives intersected with this site.

The exhibit is an example of collaboration between many communities and the importance of raising up a diverse group of voices. MNHS's research and exhibit teams consulted with dozens of community members, veterans, archaeologists, Tribal leaders, and historians to determine the most impactful stories and how to tell them in a way that will help people understand our shared history.

Not only does *Many Voices, Many Stories, One Place* elevate hidden histories, diverse stories, and non-traditional expertise, but it also encourages a better understanding of how history is created and recreated with each generation. The exhibit is located in the Plank Museum and Visitor Center, which opened in May 2022, and is open to visitors year-round.



Patty Wetterling with her son Trevor and husband Jerry at a balloon release for Jacob

## DEAR JACOB: A MOTHER'S JOURNEY OF HOPE

Jacob Wetterling was a son, a brother, and a friend. He loved to play sports and was a good student in school. His kidnapping in 1989 shocked his home community of St. Joseph, Minnesota, and the entire country. Despite continued investigation, the case remained open for more than twenty years.

When Jacob's mother, Patty, was ready to share her story with the world, she chose the Minnesota Historical Society Press to publish her book, *Dear Jacob: A Mother's Journey of Hope*. According to Patty, she and co-author Joy Baker were literally dancing when they got the call from MNHS because they trusted the integrity and support they knew they would receive.

*Dear Jacob: A Mother's Journey of Hope* is a first-hand account of a community's resilience, determination, and hope. The book details the investigative and legal steps to find and arrest Jacob's killer, who confessed and led authorities to where he buried Jacob's body 27 years after the kidnapping. It sets the record straight, telling a story many people have followed only in soundbites over the years, putting all the pieces together.

The book's message of hope is resonating with readers. In its first year, *Dear Jacob: A Mother's Journey of Hope* was MNHS Press's bestselling title, accounting for 20% of total sales for the past fiscal year.



Visitors inside *Many Voices, Many Stories, One Place* at Historic Fort Snelling.





Tammy Fairbanks at bat. Photo by Mike Zerby. From "Urban Indians," picture magazine, *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, November 18, 1979.



## REFRAMING OUR STORIES

From a decades-old box of photographs simply labeled "Indians" came the idea for a powerful exhibit. The box contained photographs taken by Twin Cities journalists from the 1950s-90s. The Native American Initiatives (NAI) department, along with local Indigenous community members, reexamined and reframed those photos, creating *Reframing our Stories*, a visually stunning photo gallery spotlighting Native American resilience and strength.

As a vivid addition to *Our Home: Native Minnesota* at the Minnesota History Center, *Reframing our Stories* inspires audiences to learn about the past, present, and future of these Native communities. Striking photos line the gallery walls, with new text showcasing strength and resilience of Native communities—both past and present—in their own words. The exhibit aims to connect the past to the present by highlighting the memories of Native community elders, friends, and their descendants. It also highlights the many grassroots Native organizations that exist in the Twin Cities.

The themes of this exhibit include:

- Our Self-Determination
- Our Wellness
- Our Teachings
- Our Resiliency
- Our Twin Cities



Celebration of the opening of *Reframing our Stories* exhibit, October 21, 2023.

Many of the featured photographs have not been seen since their initial publication. The exhibit opening provided a powerful opportunity for Native Community members from across the state to come together to see and celebrate stories by Native people, instead of about them.

*Reframing our Stories* opened in October 2023 and will remain open until October 31, 2025.



Visitors enjoy *Reframing our Stories* exhibit on opening day, October 21, 2023.



# FINANCIALS

As a nonprofit organization, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) serves all the people of Minnesota. Our annual expenditures of roughly \$75 million come from public funding, earned revenue, and private funding that work together to deliver vibrant, crucial programs and services.

Typically, two-thirds of our operating support comes from the State of Minnesota. We deliver functions designated by state law, such as managing critical records and collections and operating and preserving important historic destinations. State support includes funding from the state’s General Fund, Legacy Amendment (Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund) for statewide history and grant programs, and capital funding to preserve historic structures.

MNHS receives private support from donors, foundations, members, and corporations. Their gifts support general operations, school field trips, acquisitions, conservation, and community outreach. Finally, revenue from admissions fees, rentals, museum stores, and other activities provides a base of funding while keeping history accessible and at family-friendly prices. In FY24, we saw increased earned revenue and attendance which reflected strong support from the public.

MNHS concluded FY24 with a strong balance sheet and the resources to support future operations. Our FY24 audited financial statements are available on the MNHS website. MNHS received an unmodified opinion from auditors Clifton Larson Allen, which is the highest level of assurance a CPA firm can provide for a financial statement audit.

## MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUMMARY FINANCIALS

For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2024

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (\$ in Millions)

#### SUPPORT

MN State Appropriations	\$	52
Contributions		10
<b>Total Support</b>		<b>62</b>

#### REVENUE

Earned Revenue & Memberships		14
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#### TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE

		<b>76</b>
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Investment Return		20
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#### TOTAL SUPPORT, REVENUE & INVESTMENT

	\$	<b>96</b>
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#### EXPENSES

Sites & Museums	\$	22
Library & Collections		13
Education & Outreach		15
Heritage Preservation		8

#### Program Expenses

		<b>58</b>
Management & General		12
Development & Membership		2
Other Nonoperating Activities		2

#### Total Admin Expenses

		<b>16</b>
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#### TOTAL EXPENSES

	\$	<b>74</b>
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#### CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

	\$	<b>22</b>
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### BALANCE SHEET (\$ in Millions)

#### ASSETS

Cash	\$	11
Investments		175
Property & Equipment (Net)		113
Other Assets		40

#### Total Assets

	\$	<b>339</b>
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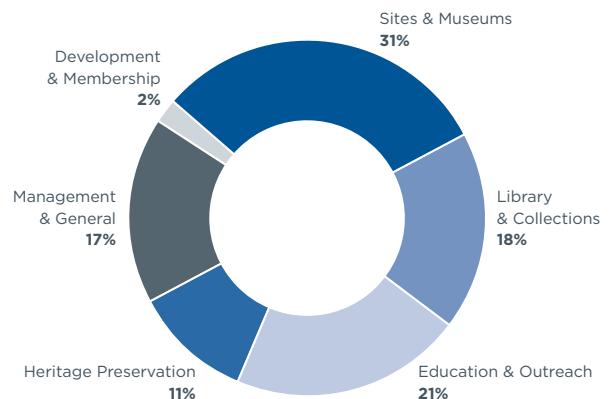
#### LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Liabilities	\$	14
Net Assets		325

#### Total Liabilities & Net Assets

	\$	<b>339</b>
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### EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



## NORTH STAR CIRCLE

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the following donors in our North Star Circle for their leadership support from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The commitment and generosity of our North Star Circle members sustains our work to serve all the people of Minnesota by creating powerful engagement with history to cultivate curiosity and foster a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed society.

### DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE

**\$50,000+**

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Michael Hurley<sup>^</sup>  
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**\$25,000+**

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Joan and Brad Brolsma  
Roger and Ronnie Brooks



## 1849 MNHS FOUNDED

The Minnesota Historical Society was established on October 20, 1849, as the fifth act of the Minnesota Territorial Legislature—almost a decade before Minnesota became a state.

Minnesota Territory Seal dated 1849

Sue and Wolfie Browender  
 Louise Bruce  
 John and Caryl Busman  
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 Sara and Edward Conley  
 Lydia Crawford and Phil Davies  
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 Westberg  
 Mary and Michael Ives  
 Elisabeth Jackley  
 Todd and Mary Jacobson  
 James Johnson and  
 Danita McVay



## 1850 MNHS PRESS PUBLISHES FIRST BOOK

Just a year after its founding, MNHS published its first book: *Annals of the Minnesota Historical Society*, a compilation of the Society's constitution, bylaws, membership, distances from St. Paul to various places, and the transcription of a lecture on French exploration. Thus began a distinguished publications program that continues to this day.

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 Andrea and Brian Kalis  
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## \$5,000 - \$9,999

The Mary Anne K. and William  
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The Barinsky Fund  
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# 1989

## FIRST YEAR OF NATIONAL HISTORY DAY MINNESOTA

National History Day in Minnesota is a co-curricular historical research program that builds college readiness and communication skills for middle and high school students. The program is sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society.

Patrick and Colleen Bollom  
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Foundation  
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# 1992

## HISTORY CENTER OPENS

After the limitations of the old headquarters became clear, The Minnesota History Center was built with marvelous facilities for exhibits, programs, library and collections.

Minnesota History Center, 1992

The Mauriel Family Foundation  
 Barbara McGraw and Steven Mosow Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation  
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**FREE ADMISSION DAY AT THE MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER SPONSOR**

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**FREE THURSDAY NIGHTS IN MAY AT THE MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER SPONSOR**

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We are grateful to these visionaries, whose generosity and support extends to including the Minnesota Historical Society as a beneficiary of a will or other planned gift. Legacy Society Members pledged \$1 million to MNHS in 2024.

Anonymous (8)  
 Jeff Allman  
 Mary Anne Anderson  
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**2003  
 MILL CITY MUSEUM BUILT**

After a 1991 fire gutted the National Historic Landmark Washburn-Crosby A Mill Complex, a world-class milling museum and education center was built within the ruins.

Mill City Museum opening, 2003

Lois Hall and Phil Morton  
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The current roster of Executive, Emeritus, and Honorary Council members can also be found at [mnhs.org/about/leadership](https://mnhs.org/about/leadership)

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The Honorary Council recognizes individuals for distinguished service to Minnesota history and advancing the mission of MNHS.

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