

NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM

PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS

New Mexico History Museum to Receive Hewett Award *Retired curator Louise Stiver also honored for lifetime achievement*



Santa Fe (Nov. 3, 2009) – The New Mexico History Museum will receive the New Mexico Association of Museums’ Hewett Award this week at the group’s annual meeting in Santa Fe. Also receiving a Hewett is Louise Stiver, retired senior curator of the History Museum, whose *Fashioning New Mexico* exhibit is on display through April 14, 2010.

The awards are named for Edgar Lee Hewett, the first director of the Museum of New Mexico from 1909 until his death in 1946. Hewett taught anthropology at UNM and was instrumental in encouraging the development of small museums throughout New Mexico. NMAM bestows two yearly awards in his honor.

The History Museum opened May 24 to blocks-long lines after 20 years of work by staff and supporters. Encompassing more than 500 years of New Mexico history, it combines artifacts, maps, photographs, films and interactive exhibits that cover everything from Native peoples to Spanish colonization, the Mexican period, the Santa Fe Trail, outlaws, the railroad, World War II, scientists, hippies and modern-day New Mexicans.

“Dr. Hewett had a comprehensive vision of what the Museum of New Mexico could be as a center of scholarship in history and many fields of anthropology,” Levine said. “The New Mexico History Museum opened in May with a strong commitment to the exploration and exhibition of New Mexico History. We are proud to accept this award and gratified that visitors have responded enthusiastically and with so much support for the newest museum in the system.”

Less than five months after opening, the Museum surpassed 100,000 visitors, doubling the annual attendance of its predecessor, the Palace of the Governors, now the Museum's largest exhibit.

"Our much anticipated new History Museum has been celebrated and applauded each and every day by visitors and observers alike since its public opening on Memorial Day weekend," said Cultural Affairs Department Secretary Stuart Ashman. "This prestigious award from NMAM is a wonderful ovation for the developing new museum, its staff, the *Fashioning New Mexico* exhibition and – most especially – the creativity and work of Ms. Stiver."

Stiver was nominated for the award by Nancy Dunn, director of the Artesia Historical Museum and Art Center. In her nomination, Dunn wrote of Stiver's role in getting the Museum up and running, adding that she "has served New Mexico museums and NMAM for many years, serving as President and in several other offices. During her term as President, Louise was personally responsible for revitalizing the association and increasing membership."

Stiver was also one of the editors of the book *Telling New Mexico: A New History*, along with Marta Weigle and Levine. The book, a collection of essays from 45 scholars and writers, accompanies the Museum's core exhibit, *Telling New Mexico: Stories from Then and Now*.

Stiver's swan song, *Fashioning New Mexico*, cuts a swath across 150 years of New Mexico costumes and clothing – from weddings to operas, fiestas to inaugurations, baptisms to an ooh-la-la interactive exhibit on underwear. Prior to the History Museum's opening, the collection lacked exhibition space with proper lighting and environmental controls. The collection's emergence from the closet (so to speak) has proved one of the most popular aspects of the new museum.

For information on the exhibit, as well as a selection of photographs, log onto <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/events.php?action=detail&eventID=407>.

The New Mexico History Museum is the newest addition to a campus that includes the Palace of the Governors, the oldest continuously occupied public building in the United States; Fray Angélico Chávez History Library; Palace of the Governors Photo Archives; the Press at the Palace of the Governors; and the Native American Artisans Program. The New Mexico History Museum/Palace of the Governors, 113 Lincoln Ave., is a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs. For more information, visit www.nmhistorymuseum.org.

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