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ELMHURST HISTORY MUSEUM AWARDED BY ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

ELMHURST, IL (April 2024) – This month, the [Elmhurst History Museum](#), 120 E Park Ave., was honored to receive two prestigious awards from the Illinois Association of Museums (IAM). The regional history museum was awarded the **2024 Award of Superior Achievement (Conservation/Collections)** and the **2024 Award of Excellence (Special Projects)**, both showcasing the dedication and ingenuity of the Elmhurst History Museum (EHM) staff.

The Elmhurst History Museum was one of the few organizations to be honored with a 2024 **Award of Superior Achievement** (Conservation/Collections). The award recognizes the EHM’s extraordinary restoration of a historically significant painting by George Peter Alexander (G.P.A.) Healy, depicting Jennie “Jane” Byrd Bryan, wife of Thomas Barbour Bryan, a distinguished figure in Chicago and Elmhurst history. The Bryans were early Elmhurst residents who built one of the town’s gracious estates. Best known for his portraits of several U.S. Presidents as well as other politicians and celebrities in America and Europe, Healy lived in Elmhurst during the Civil War years under the patronage of the Bryan family. Led by EHM’s Curator of Collections, Daniel Lund, the painting restoration project began with the acquisition of the painting through private donations and the support of the **Elmhurst Heritage Foundation**. The painting now hangs in the museum’s *By All Accounts: The Story of Elmhurst* exhibit, accompanied by a short documentary and historical information.

Regarding EHM’s Award of Superior Achievement, the IAM stated, “to acquire and restore an important painting by itself would be triumph enough. However, to acquire, restore, and integrate the painting into an exhibit explaining both the significance of the painter and the local family within the space of two years, while also maintaining all of the other museum programs and priorities is truly remarkable. Elmhurst History Museum is highly commended on its achievement.”

The museum was also honored to receive the 2024 **Award of Excellence** (Special Projects) for supporting programs and events tied to EHM’s 2022-2023 exhibit, *In Pursuit of Happiness: Immigrants in Our Communities*. IAM shared, “the slate of programs created to support an exhibit about the modern immigrant experience in Elmhurst was truly impressive – the diversity of events ranged from concerts to holiday celebrations to talks about the immigrant experience. The museum strove to open new doors to the community, and their surveys showing the events drew new visitors from many neighborhoods proved that they did just what they set out to do.” Spearheaded by Jessie Wandersee, EHM Supervisor of Education Services, the museum offered a variety of unique and accessible programs to compliment the

exhibit, including a riveting performance by the Chicago Immigrant Orchestra and a Cultural Crossroads Celebration, held in partnership with Elmhurst's York High School International Club, Immigrant Solidarity DuPage, and the Xilin Foundation.

The Elmhurst History Museum is open to all ages and offers free admission. The museum is open 1 – 5 p.m. Sunday & Tuesday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Saturday, and closed Monday. For additional information on exhibits or programs, please visit www.elmhursthhistory.org.

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The Elmhurst History Museum is a department of the City of Elmhurst supported by the Elmhurst Heritage Foundation, a 501c3 non-profit organization. The Museum is located at 120 E. Park Ave. in downtown Elmhurst. General admission is free. For more information, call 630-833-1457 or visit our website at elmhursthhistory.org.

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