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National Park Service Grant to Fund Educational Program on African American History and Pittsburgh's National Negro Opera House

PITTSBURGH— The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation is pleased to announce a grant of **\$41,378** from the African American Civil Rights Grant Program, through the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

The grant will enable PHLF to design an educational program around the National Negro Opera House, that will not only highlight the history and significance of the building in African American history, but also the importance of its restoration and preservation. The program will be titled, *A Legacy in Stone: Homewood's National Negro Opera House and the Confluence of Pittsburgh's African American Culture*.

“We are delighted to receive this grant, which will enable us to not only deepen our understanding of the significance of the National Negro Opera House and its place in American history, but also tells the greater story of the African American experience in Pittsburgh in the first half of the Twentieth Century,” said PHLF President Michael Sriprasert.

As part of this program, PHLF will prepare and submit a nomination of the National Negro Opera House for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This will include the creation of an educational component to explore the history of the building, bringing an understanding of the depth of Pittsburgh's African American cultural legacy to a younger generation of students.

This grant is one of 53 projects in 20 states funded by a total of \$15,035,000 from the National Park Service's African American Civil Rights Grant Program.

“This grant makes it possible for us to work with educators in sharing the history of the National Negro Opera House with more students, helping even more people learn about and appreciate the significant African American history reflected in this landmark building in Homewood,” said PHLF Co-Director of Education, Sarah Greenwald.

Listed in 2020 as one of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*, by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Queen Anne-style house in the Homewood neighborhood of Pittsburgh, was once a place of prominence for African American entertainers, musicians, and sports figures.

The house served as a lodging house and a community space for prominent African Americans visiting Pittsburgh during the era of segregation when it was not easy for African Americans to gain lodging in white-owned establishments. It is currently undergoing efforts to renovate and restore it by a group of stakeholders led by its owner Jonnet Solomon.

PHLF has been working with Ms. Solomon to help implement a strategy of restoration and renovation of the building. This includes an initial stabilization study to assess the feasibility of restoration and an ongoing engineering assessment of the building to analyze stabilization of the hillside behind the house and restoration of a historic wall along the property.

Founded in 1964, the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation is a nonprofit membership organization working to: identify and save historically significant places; revitalize historic neighborhoods, towns, and urban areas; preserve historic farms and historic designed landscapes; and educate people about the Pittsburgh region's rich architectural heritage. www.phlf.org

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