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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

History Center tapped for prestigious publication awards

Florida Historical Society honors Orlando museum's magazine, newspaper series

ORLANDO, Fla. – May 20, 2025 – Orange County Regional History Center writers and editors recently received prestigious awards at the Florida Historical Society's annual Public History Forum, which met this year in Orlando during the city's 150th anniversary year.

The society's Golden Quill awards both went to Orange County Regional History Center publications. The first, for an outstanding magazine article, honored Orlando historian Rick Kilby for "Commodore Rose and the River of Freedom." Published in the Fall 2024 issue of History Center's magazine, *Reflections from Central Florida*, the article tells the story of a formerly enslaved woman's influential role in the world of 19th-century Florida steamboats.

The second FHS Golden Quill award, given to a series of articles, honored the History Center's "The Way We Were" monthly contributions to Orlando's *Community Paper*. Travis Puterbaugh, the museum's curator of collections, edited the award-winning series, and the submission included articles by Liss Castillo, Kelly D'Ambrosio, Jeremy Hileman, Adaeze Nwigwe, and Rachel Williams, and Joy Wallace Dickinson.

Dickinson, who is the History Center's editor, also received the Florida Historical Society's Patrick D. Smith 2025 Award for her mystery novel *Secrets of the Flamingo Café*, set in Orlando in 1948. Named for the author of the beloved novel *A Land Remembered*, the award recognizes a book of fiction on a Florida history topic.

"It's a remarkable honor to be recognized by such a distinguished organization, especially during such a meaningful year for our city," said Azela Santana, executive director for the museum. "These awards reflect the care, creativity, and historical insight that go into our publications, and we're proud to see stories from our region resonating so strongly across the state."

Based at the Library of Florida History in Cocoa, the not-for-profit FHS is considered the state's oldest cultural organization, established in 1856. Its many projects include the popular *Florida Frontiers* radio and TV programs, aired across the state, and the *Florida History Quarterly*, an academic journal based at the University of Central Florida. Each spring, the society honors significant contributions to Florida's history through an endowed awards program focused on books, articles, and other media. Entries are evaluated by independent panels of judges appointed by the society.

In addition to receiving awards, History Center staff also participated in panels and programs at the FHS

Public History Forum and hosted tours of the new exhibition, *Orlando Collected*, which explores the city's history through 150 rarely seen objects from the museum's collection.

The Orange County Regional History Center, housed in a historic courthouse at 65 E. Central Blvd. in downtown Orlando, features four floors of permanent and special exhibitions. The museum is a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It is funded in part by Orange County Government through the Community & Family Services Department under Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the Board of County Commissioners. The Historical Society of Central Florida Inc. is supported by United Arts of Central Florida and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. For more information, visit TheHistoryCenter.org.

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