Footprints

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Eboni Gatlin Griffin

William Simon Harris

Richard B. “Dick” Moore

Robert A. “Bob” Simmons

Elman Studio

Dr. Melanie Zeck

Patricia Arnett Zeck

2026 Hall of Legends

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HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

From the Archives

For many years, the Howard County Historical Society was in the basement of the courthouse. The HCHS used this home from 1938 until 1972 when the Seiberling Mansion became the home of the HCHS. We invite you to come to see the Howard County museum and the Seiberling Mansion. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. See more at facebook.com/HCHistory

From the Executive Director

Dive Right In

Dearest Gentle History Enthusiast,

Welcome to 2026 with the Howard County Historical Society! It seems as though the time goes faster and faster as we move along these days. With this issue of Footprints, we are excited to share everything that happened in 2025, general news and updates, and of course our 2026 Hall of Legends inductees.

As with the changing of the seasons, we have also had some changes with staff and board members. Laura Cone, our volunteer and outreach coordinator, stepped away from her role to spend more time with family and we miss her greatly! Her hard work over the past year set up a great updated framework for her successor, Caroline Moore. Check later in this issue for more on Caroline! We also have welcomed two new board members – Carrie Giannakos and Sarah Cotner – to the fold. They have jumped right in with their sleeves rolled up! I am so thankful for all of our staff, board, and volunteers for all of their hard work!

Last year was a year full of brick and mortar work – literally! As you can imagine, keeping up with four historic buildings is no small feat. Thanks to some generous grants and funding, we were able to repair a major leak in the box gutters on the east side of the mansion and then subsequent tuck pointing after that. Pioneer Restoration has been doing an amazing job of not only doing great work, but adhering to best preservation practices as they do so. As stewards of this historic campus, it is imperative that we maintain the buildings to remain historically accurate while utilizing the most appropriate materials possible. Five of our six chimneys have been tuck pointed as well. There should be no more leaks on the east side of the building!

Additionally, we were able to finally complete some plaster repair in the Butternut and Pioneer Rooms of the mansion. Long story short: water is the biggest threat to historic buildings! In 2026, we are looking forward to completing some roof projects. We all know the work never ends!

As we watch what is happening in our world today, I would like to draw attention specifically to what's happening in the museum world where, on a national level, there have been prominent news reports of larger museums and cultural organizations not only losing funding but being forced to remove or change exhibits for ideological reasons. I know every single one of you thinks that history and culture are important. You wouldn't be here otherwise. I appreciate your passion for what we do on a daily basis, for our events, our programming, our exhibits, and our buildings.As we go forward in today's world, I trust in your continued support for the Howard County Historical Society and its mission. It is our job, as keepers of Howard County history, to address ALL of the history that has happened here. Which is why several years ago our board adopted a mission statement edited to reflect that we "…collect, preserve and share the diverse history of all the peoples of Howard County." I believe that this organization has done an amazing job in the past several years of sharing history from multiple angles, including celebrating lesser-known narratives in our community. We plan to continue those efforts as we move forward. Thank you again for your support; it is invaluable. If you have any concerns as a member, please feel free to reach out to me or members of the board.

I hope you enjoy this larger issue of Footprints. Dive right in!

Anne
Anne Shaw
HCHS Executive Director

America 250 in Howard County

If you haven't heard, America has a special birthday this year!

We are celebrating the Semiquincentennial of our great nation all year long. While we take a look back at our national history, we here at HCHS are also keeping Howard County history at the forefront.

The America 250 Committee has been meeting for several months now and I can assure you there will be lots of activities this year!

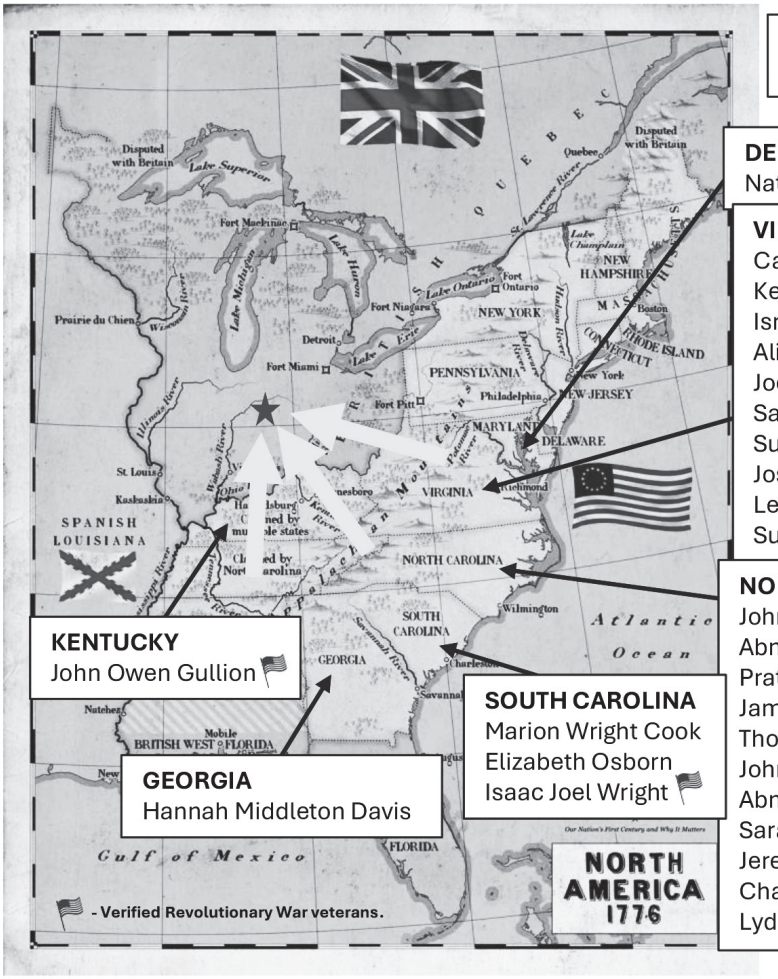
Here at HCHS, we will be having an ice cream social on **July 4th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.** We will be offering free admission to the museum, free ice cream, activities for kids and kids at heart, various booths from local organizations, a history open house in the Elliott House and more!

In partnership with Indiana University Kokomo, there will also be a lecture series on Howard County history and America 250 with talks on **May 13, June 17, Aug. 12, and Sept 10 (all at 6 p.m.)**.

Please stay tuned for more information by following our Facebook page and our website at www.hchistory.org/programs/america-250.

(The background image is a 1755 map highlighting the Native American population in the Great Lakes region. Source: Library of Congress)

Howard County Historian Gilbert Porter is working with the City of Kokomo, the Kokomo Early History Learning Center, and HCHS to archive conversations with our Native American population (Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore is a citizen of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma) and to chronicle the oldest people buried in Howard County cemeteries. The list below is people born during or before the Revolution era, 1760 to 1780, who later came to live, work and be buried here. The archive will be available on various media platforms. (Map: americanacorner.com)



SCOTLAND
William McDannold

DELAWARE
Nathan Carr

VIRGINIA
Catharine Devore Amos
Keziah Bunnell Dean
Israel Ferree
Aliff Henley
Joel Hollingsworth
Sarah Ann Schultz Lemasters
Susannah Stout Lindley
Joseph Snodgrass III
Lewis Ludwig Summers
Susannah Haworth Wright

NORTH CAROLINA
John Cashatt
Abner Adam Clark
Pratt Wilson Jessup
James Lindley
Thomas Maris
John Osborn
Abner Ratcliff
Sarah Cashatt Ratcliff
Jeremiah Routh
Charles Stout
Lydia Noblett Stout

KENTUCKY
John Owen Gullion

SOUTH CAROLINA
Marion Wright Cook
Elizabeth Osborn
Isaac Joel Wright

GEORGIA
Hannah Middleton Davis

The Howard County Historical Society invites you to join in celebrating the induction of six new members into the Howard County Hall of Legends at a ceremony set for April 23.

The event will be held in Hingst Hall on the Ivy Tech Kokomo campus at 1815 E. Morgan St. Doors open at 6 p.m. with a dinner and program to follow.

I know I sound like a broken record every single year, but this year's class is filled with very deserving people, each one accomplished in their own right. From a Philippine-American War hero who was finally awarded his Medal of Honor more than a century later … to two local "small-town girls" who are making a difference nationally and globally … to a local pro golf course "Imagineer" who designed or helped build almost 90 courses … to a dedicated local business-man and community leader … to a beloved high school teacher known for inspiring others, this class has had wide-ranging impact. And, for only the third time in the Hall of Legends' 16 classes, we are excited to induct two members of the same family at the same time!

We are looking forward to honoring all of these amazing individuals in April with some great food, a wonderful video tribute, and some well-deserved awards. Please read on to learn more about each inductee as written by our talented group of writers.

Tickets are $65 and available on our website at www.hchistory.org/programs/howard-county-legends, our office at 1218 W. Sycamore St., or by phone at 765-452-4314.

-- Anne Shaw
Executive Director
Howard County
Historical Society

2026 Hall of Legends

Eboni Gatlin Griffin

William Simon Harris

Richard B. “Dick” Moore

Robert A. “Bob” Simmons

Elman Studio

Dr. Melanie Zeck

Patricia Arnett Zeck

2026 Hall of Legends

Eboni Gatlin Griffin

Text by Anne Shaw, Executive Director, Howard County Historical Society

2026 Hall of Legends

EBONI GATLIN GRIFFIN'S KOKOMO ROOTS RUN DEEP.

The house she was raised in was home to her mother's family and grandmother's family before that. Griffin jokes that she's related to half the town of Kokomo, a situation that created a support system still in place today.

Growing up the youngest of four children in a household that focused on current events, Griffin says that "the news" was always on in their home. Little did she know she would eventually be producing news segments on one of the most popular and longest running TV shows of our day.

She remembers watching Andrea Morehead and Cheryl Parker, prominent Indianapolis newscasters who provided her with strong Black female role models. As she grew older, the Kokomo Area Career Center at Kokomo High School offered opportunities to pursue her interest in broadcasting. There, advisor Alice McKellar taught her students what it took to put on a newscast, even entering (and winning!) competitions throughout the state. Griffin had a huge leg up when she arrived at Indiana University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Journalism.

By her senior year at KHS, Griffin was very involved of all aspects of high school. Even when she discovered that she was pregnant, she kept going full steam ahead. The stigma of being a pregnant teen could make life difficult, but she says for every critic, there were at least 10 people holding her up and supporting her dreams. As she graduated with the KHS Class of 2002, teachers, counselors, family, friends all pushed her to continue her path to college and beyond.

It wasn't easy. At IU, Griffin worked her way through school, holding down jobs, attending classes, and caring for her daughter. While there, she was able to secure an internship at Fox News in New York City, which really opened her eyes to the possibilities of broadcasting. The internship turned into a job.

Griffin honed her skills for three years at Fox and then 11 years at CNN in Atlanta. In 2020, she was approached by Good Morning America to become senior broadcast producer for host Robin Roberts. In that role, Griffin leads a team that finds stories, sets up shoots, does research, arranges interviews, and creates every part of what eventually becomes a great piece of TV news.

Griffin credits her Midwestern upbringing for her ability to see all aspects of a story and to have a natural curiosity for what makes good news. She has been blessed with opportunities to interact with well-known inspirational people in what she calls "pinch me" moments, producing interviews with Michelle Obama, Brittney Griner, Christina Applegate, and Liza Minelli to name a few. She is quick to point out that not all stories are "fun and rainbows," but it's their responsibility (and privilege) to report on the things that matter – good or bad.

What advice does she have for today's Kokomo High School students? Get involved! Enjoy your experiences and savor those pivotal moments in your life. This is sound advice from someone who has worked incredibly hard to achieve her goals and then some.

William Simon Harris

Text by Pat Munsey, Editor, Kokomo Lantern

2026 Hall of Legends

THE PRAIRIE VIEW A&M PANTHERS WENT 80 GAMES WITHOUT A WIN IN COLLEGE FOOTBALL. The Chicago Cubs' infamous streak without a World Series championship in baseball spanned 108 years.

Both of those streaks began and ended while William Simon Harris waited for his Medal of Honor.

The U.S. Army veteran and long-time Kokomo resident earned the medal for his actions in the Philippine Insurrection of 1899. It was approved by the U.S. government in 1906, but the letter informing him of the honor never arrived and Harris lived to the age of 89 not knowing of this recognition.

That all changed last year. Thanks to the efforts of Harris's family, the Texas-based historian who discovered the error, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1152 in Kokomo, the long-overdue medal was presented to the family in January 2025 by Indiana Gov. Mike Braun, who had advocated for the issuance of the medal while serving as a U.S. senator.

And on Oct. 31, 2025, a crowd gathered in Memorial Park Cemetery to recognize Harris's service after a 119-year wait. The ceremony centered on the replacement of Harris's headstone, which now reflects his service. The slab of white marble is emblazoned with his name in gold, along with the Medal of Honor emblem, a gold star within a wreath.

Since the Civil War, only 3,547 service members have received the Medal of Honor, less than one ten-thousandth of a percent of the 40 million Americans who have served in the armed forces. William Simon Harris is the only one from Howard County.

Harris enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1898, and he was assigned to the 4th U.S. Cavalry. In 1899, his unit was deployed in the Philippine insurrection. Here is the citation for the honor, as declared by President Theodore Roosevelt, when it was approved.

"Private William S. Harris distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty on May 13, 1899, while serving as a member of Troop G, 4th United States Cavalry at San Miguel de Mayumo, Luzon, Philippine Islands. On this occasion about 300 of the enemy were drawn up in line in an advantageous position requiring a frontal attack. Without waiting for the supporting battalion to reinforce them, or to get into a position to do so, Private Harris and 11 other Scouts charged the line of the enemy, about 150 yards distant, and completely routed them. Private Harris' conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army."

Harris was born in Casey, Illinois, in 1873. He spent most of his adult life in the Kokomo area, where he and his wife raised a son and a daughter. Research indicates his occupations included connections with the Nickel Plate railroad, a Kokomo brass works and Kingston Products. He died in Kokomo in 1963. Today, several of his descendents still live in Kokomo, some of whom proudly accepted the Medal of Honor at the ceremony in 2025.

Richard B. “Dick” Moore

Text by Sarah Cotner, Hall of Legends Committee

2026 Hall of Legends

RICHARD B. "DICK" MOORE SPENT DECADES HELPING SHAPE THE GROWTH AND STRENGTH OF THE KOKOMO COMMUNITY THROUGH HIS LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS AND HIS QUIET COMMITMENT TO HELPING OTHERS.

Through his work in the title and escrow industry and his generosity toward local charitable causes, Dick became a trusted figure whose efforts supported both the economic and civic life of Howard County. His career reflected a deep belief that successful businesses should help strengthen the communities they serve.

Dick's path to Kokomo began with a strong foundation in family, education, and hard work. Born in 1947 in Huntington, Indiana, he attended Xavier University in Cincinnati, served in the United States Army Reserve, and worked as Huntington County surveyor before moving to Kokomo in 1972 to manage Anderson Abstract Company. That began what would become a decades-long career in the title and escrow industry. He purchased the company in 1985 and continued to build the business that, in 1998, became Moore Title & Escrow, a name well known throughout Howard County for professionalism and trust.

Over the course of his career, Dick helped countless individuals and organizations navigate important milestones – home ownership, business expansion, neighborhoods evolving. His careful attention to detail and commitment to ethical business practices earned him the respect of colleagues, clients, and community leaders. He was active in the Indiana Land Title Association, the Realtors Association of Central Indiana and the Howard County Homebuilders Association.

Meanwhile, often behind the scenes, Dick quietly supported numerous local charitable causes and nonprofit organizations. He coached youth baseball and basketball and served St. Joseph/St. Vincent Hospital, the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, United Way, Knights of Columbus and St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church. He believed a strong community is measured not only by economic success but by how compassionately it cares for its most vulnerable members. In 2020, Dick helped bring a Safe Haven Baby Box to Kokomo Fire Station No. 1, offering a live-saving resource to women in crisis.

Family was central to Dick's life. He valued time with loved ones and the relationships that shaped both his personal life and his work in the community. He and wife Margi raised their five children in Kokomo, where all five – and their families, which include Dick and Margi's 12 grandchildren – continue to contribute professionally and civically.

Dick also carried a meaningful connection to the history of the region. He was a descendant of Miami Chief Jean Baptiste de Richardville, after whom Howard County was originally named Richardville County. Chief Richardville was a principal leader of the Miami people in the early 19th century and played an important role in treaties and negotiations that shaped the settlement of north-central Indiana. Dick took pride in this heritage and valued the cultural history that shaped the community he called home.

Dick Moore passed away in 2022 at the age of 75. His life and legacy embody the values celebrated by the Howard County Hall of Legends -- dedication, integrity, and service to community.

Robert A. "Bob" Simmons

Text by Jon Kelley, Hall of Legends Contributor

2026 Hall of Legends

KOKOMO GOLFERS WHO HAVE PLAYED THE GREEN ACRES COURSE FREQUENTLY STATE THAT IT IS THE BEST LAYOUT IN THE CITY.

Its designer, Bob Simmons, was actually a native of Kokomo who left his mark across the country by designing or building almost 90 golf courses and facilities including 30 in Indiana.

Simmons was born into a poor household in Camden, Indiana, in 1908; the family moved to Kokomo when he was a little boy. As he got older, he caddied at the Kokomo Country Club for notable residents such as three-time Indiana Amateur champion Bob Resener and Dr A.W. Holcombe. He was greatly influenced by those he served as caddy.

Simmons became an excellent player, setting five course records, and became a Professional Golf Association (PGA) golf professional serving at seven facilities including Kokomo's American Legion course and the Kokomo Country Club.

In 1940, he built the Kokomo Driving Range where Rural King now stands on South Lafontaine Street and added a miniature golf course a year later. In 1951, the family, which now included wife Joan and children Cinda, Jill, Jan and Jack, moved to Houston, Texas. Soon he was asked by some entrepreneurs whether he could build a golf course and he confidently said "yes." In 1955, he built that first course in Texas, called Jersey Meadow, and designing and constructing golf courses became the love of his life.

Simmons moved the family back to Kokomo in 1956. In 1957, Simmons met prominent American golf course architect Dick Wilson and began a working relationship as Wilson's construction supervisor. The two men collaborated on 17 courses including such notable facilities as Royal Montreal, Doral and Bay Hill.

"Dad had authority over design as well as construction on those courses," daughter Cinda Rutherford said. "Wilson gave him much authority, and he trusted his judgement about modifying his designs."

Simmons was very proud of the enormous Royal Montreal project that – in 1957 - took 600 acres of land and converted it into 45 holes of golf in only five months.

In 1962, Simmons focsued on his own numerous designs and worked until his death in 1986.

In assessing Simmons's work, golf architecture author Ron Whitten noted, "As a design-and-build specialist, Simmons was well ahead of his time in his profession."

In 1992, wife Joan wrote: "If Bob hadn't been in the golf business, he surely would have been in show business. He was a happy, optimistic extrovert, and a story teller to equal Bob Hope or Danny Thomas. He had a sense of humor that kept everyone laughing long after the story had been told. Singing was also one of the joys of his life."

The family is proud that Simmons is now getting the recognition that he never sought but richly deserves. Cinda is a long-time volunteer for the Howard County Historical Society having received recognition for more than 20 years of service

Dr. Melanie Zeck

Elman Studio

Text by Gilbert Porter, Howard County Historian

2026 Hall of Legends

ONE OF THE THINGS DR. MELANIE ZECK LIKES ABOUT BEING A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS IN WASHINGTON, D.C., IS THE "INTELLECTUAL LATITUDE" OF HER JOB.

It's an apt attribute for this gifted and intensely curious Kokomo, Indiana, native. Education through exploration was encouraged while growing up in the Zeck home. Father Jon is a retired deputy sheriff and longtime law enforcement historian in Howard County, Indiana. Brother Jon David is a popular local travel and lifestyle influencer with a degree from Indiana University Kokomo.

And mother Patty taught science with vigor and distinction for 45 years at Northwestern High School. She joins her daughter this year as a fellow Hall of Legends inductee.

In fact, Melanie credits her parents for introducing her to the world of libraries and the rewards of research. Alongside her historian dad, the reference librarians at the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library taught her how to use a card catalog and she recalls the exhilaration of learning how to find new information that she had not seen before.

That experience probably determined her future. "At college, I worked in the library," she says. "Then I went to library school, and now I've been a librarian for over half my life. When you ask for my help with a problem or a question, it becomes our problem or question until it is satisfactorily answered. I just love that about research."

The Kokomo High School graduate (1995) followed her mother's undergraduate path to Indiana State University, leaving Terre Haute with two bachelor's degrees. Next came two decades in Chicago, earning master's degrees in library science (Dominican University) and musicology (Northwestern University), capped by a doctorate in Music History and Theory at the University of Chicago.

She was a Research Fellow at the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR) at Chicago's Columbia College, co-authoring The Transformation of Black Music (Oxford University Press 2017) with CBMR founder, the late Dr. Samuel A. Floyd Jr. During that time, Zeck also was Managing Editor of the Black Music Research Journal.

Today, at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center, Zeck serves as invited speaker, panelist, and moderator for events sponsored by organizations including Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, the Glenn Gould Foundation (Toronto), the League of American Orchestras, and the American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Zeck has presented at meetings of the American Musicological Society, the Music Library Association, the Society for American Music, the African Studies Association, and the Global Association for the Promotion of Swahili. Currently, she is editor of the Music Library Association's Basic Manual Series.

For Dr. Melanie Zeck, life is all about that latitude, to teach and explore from Kokomo to Kenya. And what's the best thing about being a librarian? "Let us know what ideas you have. We'll connect you to resources that have the potential to change your life."

Patricia Arnett Zeck

Text by Gilbert Porter, Howard County Historian

2026 Hall of Legends

THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN OF PLANTS AND FLOWERS AT SHILOH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN WESTERN HOWARD COUNTY, INDIANA, IS A BOUNTY OF BEAUTY TENDED TO BY CHURCH MEMBER VOLUNTEERS.

Patricia Arnett Zeck takes immense pride in helping to create this stunning showcase each year. Since joining Shiloh in 1980, her extensive contributions have included choir member, church council, and enough committee work to earn her the United Methodist Women Recognition in 2010. Most recently she helped to compile and write Shiloh's sesquicentennial anniversary book.

Caring, giving, cultivating and publishing aptly describe Zeck's experiences since coming to Howard County with freshly minted biology (bachelor's) and ecology (master's) degrees from Indiana State University. A science teacher was needed at Northwestern School Corporation, and this Hoosier native from Terre Haute opened her classroom and laboratory in August 1968.

Her record is impressive – and far-reaching. For 45 years she taught biological sciences, chemistry, and research at Northwestern High School. Zeck-sponsored students advanced to the Indiana state science fairs for 25 years and on to international science and engineering fairs for 27 years. Many of these students she introduced to the wonders of the scientific world went on to teach; several became doctors.

It seemed the county couldn't contain her. Zeck served on both the Science Education Advisory Committee for the Indiana Academy of Science and Youth Activities Committee. She assisted the Indiana Department of Education by authoring or reviewing standards for biology, chemistry, environmental science, and anatomy/physiology.

After being named Indiana Outstanding Biology Teacher in 2002, Zeck was awarded Fellow Status from the Indiana Academy of Science and then won its Distinguished Service Award. At the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc., she was so active as an officer and publications editor that they presented her with their Distinguished Service Award.

But bigger blossoms opened as well. In 2001, Zeck traveled to Washington, D.C. for the U.S. Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, then the nation's highest honors for K-12 teachers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The following year, she visited Japan as a participant in the prestigious Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program for U.S. primary and secondary educators.

Back home in Howard County, she and husband Jon, a retired deputy sheriff and longtime law enforcement historian, raised two children and several beagles. Son Jon David is a popular local travel and lifestyle influencer working in food service. Daughter Melanie, a reference librarian at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., joins her mother as a fellow Hall of Legends inductee for 2026.

Zeck's influence continues in ways large and small. As evidence, consider the heartfelt greetings she regularly receives from former students who may see her at area restaurants. She was so well-regarded that the Kokomo Tribune in 2013 lauded her in an editorial the day she retired.

Earlier Than You Think, You Couldn't Take a Drink: Howard County and Prohibition

By Randy Smith
HCHS Assistant Curator

Indiana's efforts to prohibit alcohol sales and consumption began in the 19th century, long before national prohibition in 1920.

Two early attempts at prohibition in the state were declared unconstitutional by the Indiana Supreme Court. By 1847, nearly all Indiana counties had for their use a "local option" to prohibit alcohol manufacturing and sales.

In 1853. this was found unconstitutional. Indiana tried again in 1855 to prohibit alcohol sales and manufacturing. The only exceptions were sales for medicinal, chemical, mechanical, and religious reasons. In 1858, this law was declared unconstitutional.

During the Civil War, the state's attention was drawn elsewhere and interest in prohibition laws waned. After the Civil War, interest again rose in the prohibition of alcohol in the United States and in Indiana.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) started advocating for prohibition when it was organized in 1873. Shortly thereafter, the group's first success in shutting down saloons was in Washington Court House, Ohio.

The WCTU continued its efforts throughout the years. In 1893, they were joined by the Anti-Saloon League (ASL) which also advocated against alcohol consumption. This organization soon overshadowed the WCTU to become the most powerful prohibition lobby in the United States.

In the early 20th century, influenced by the Indiana ASL, the state legislature passed several restrictive prohibition laws. One, passed in 1905, required a two-year waiting period between the application for and the issuance of a liquor license. Another, passed in 1907, allowed the search and seizure of suspected illegal saloons. These were called "blind tigers." If convicted under this law, a jail sentence was mandatory.

By the end of 1909, 70 of Indiana's 92 counties prohibited the sale of alcohol. Howard County joined this group on February 23 of that year. Polling made the county dry by 1,422 votes. Only 13 of 46 precincts in the county voted in favor of alcohol sales. None of those 13 precincts were outside Center Township and only one of those 13 was outside Kokomo.

In 1908, Kokomo had 30 saloons. As a result of a county court ruling, some were allowed to stay open.

This did not mean that all saloons had to close immediately. In 1908, Kokomo had 30 saloons. As a result of a county court ruling, some were allowed to stay open. Any saloon that had its license before Indiana's local option law went into effect on November 20, 1908, was allowed to stay open one year based on the date of its license. Any saloon obtaining its license after that date had to close within 90

Howard County Historical Society

The Blue Ribbon Saloon closed on May 18, 1909, due to the new law. It was located on South Main Street.

days of the anti-saloon vote in Howard County. The last three saloons in Kokomo closed at 11p.m. Friday, November 12, 1909.

An article in The American Issue in 1910 regarding Kokomo revealed that many businesses saw an increase in their revenues once the saloons were closed since the saloons weren't taking the money that they once were. One unnamed manufacturer stated that while saloons were open, Monday was the worst day of the week for his business. After the saloons were closed, Monday became the most productive day.

Though the Indiana legislature changed the 1908 county local option law to a city and township local option law and many localities allowed alcohol sales again, Howard County remained alcohol free. There is some reporting in the local news about blind tigers being found from time to time, but there were no legal alcohol sales in the county until the end of Prohibition in December 1933.

Sources:

Essay: The Road to Prohibition in Indiana, 2011, Indiana Historical Society,

Author: Jane Hedeen

Kokomo Daily Tribune, 1909, various dates

The American Issue, Volume 5, 1910, p. 2 "Some Facts from 'Dry' Kokomo, Indiana"

The Anti-Saloon League Yearbook, 1913, pp. 84-85

2025: Christmas at the Seiberling

Images courtesy Howard County Historical Society

The Hoosier String Players entertain visitors on a sponsored evening at Christmas at the Seiberling.

By Judy Brown
HCHS Volunteer

The Seiberling Mansion is cleaned, back to its normal grandeur and open for visitors after a challenging Christmastime. Despite the challenges, we celebrated another successful holiday season.

In the fall, the mansion's exterior began to look very elegant when our new light crew, "The SqueeGees," took on the job of lighting the outside of the mansion and surrounding grounds. On Nov. 11, 22 individuals or groups began to transform the beautiful home into its annual Christmas spectacle.

They carried out this year's theme of "The Carols of Christmas" with songs ranging from Rock Around the Christmas Tree to Away in a Manger. Five groups or individuals were new to decorating this year.

As a result of the Arctic blast that brought unsafe frigid temperatures, opening night was postponed until the following Wednesday. Much appreciated were the adjustments by our sponsor The Wyman Group, decorators, hosts, musicians, staff and all of our guests.

We hosted guests for 22 days in December and were open for visitors on eight evenings thanks to sponsors The Wyman Group, First Farmers Bank & Trust, Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo, Howard County, Community First Bank, City of Kokomo and Duke Energy. On six evenings, guests were entertained by musical groups including Kokomo Men of Note, IUK Flute Choir, Hoosier String Players, Winding Creek Friends, Kokomo Park Band Brass Group, and Kokomo Brass Quintet. Santa greeted young and old alike as they made their way through the beautifully transformed rooms.

Guests voted for favorite rooms via monetary donations selecting once again The Dining Room decorated by Marella Williams and Eunice Jackson as their favorite followed by The Parlor by Angela Washington and The Walnut Bedroom by Symposium.

HCHS is happy to share enjoyment of our mansion at this special time of year and especially thank the sponsors who make it possible for the evenings to be free of admission charge.

Planning for Christmas 2026 will begin soon and we would invite anyone who would like to decorate a space to contact the HCHS Office at 765-453-4314, Angela Washington at 219-201-8919 or Judy Brown at 765-432-4101

Clockwise from upper left, Decorators Marella Williams and Eunice Jackson in the Dining Room, the people's choice award winner. The mansion's front stairway artfully decorated by Waterford Place Health Campus. Decorator Angela Washington in the beautifully decorated Parlor, a close second in the people's choice award. And Washington explains the theme of "The Carols of Christmas" to visitors during a sponsored evening.

Tolen defeats Mayor!
2025 Mr. Kingston's Auto Exhibition

By Alyssa Witter-Pier
HCHS Curator

The annual Mr. Kingston's Auto Exhibition was a big success again in 2025 at the Howard County Museum July 25 and 26.

Unfortunately, the forecast indicated inclement weather. For the safety of our visitors, historic cars, and grounds, we transformed our regular planned car display into an indoor photograph exhibit throughout the mansion.

Despite only raining a little, we know that our decision to prioritize safety was best. Pivoting the event indoors enabled car owners to sit and talk about the history of their cars with guests. Thanks to The Hoosier String Players, visitors could peruse the mansion while listening to some lively tunes.

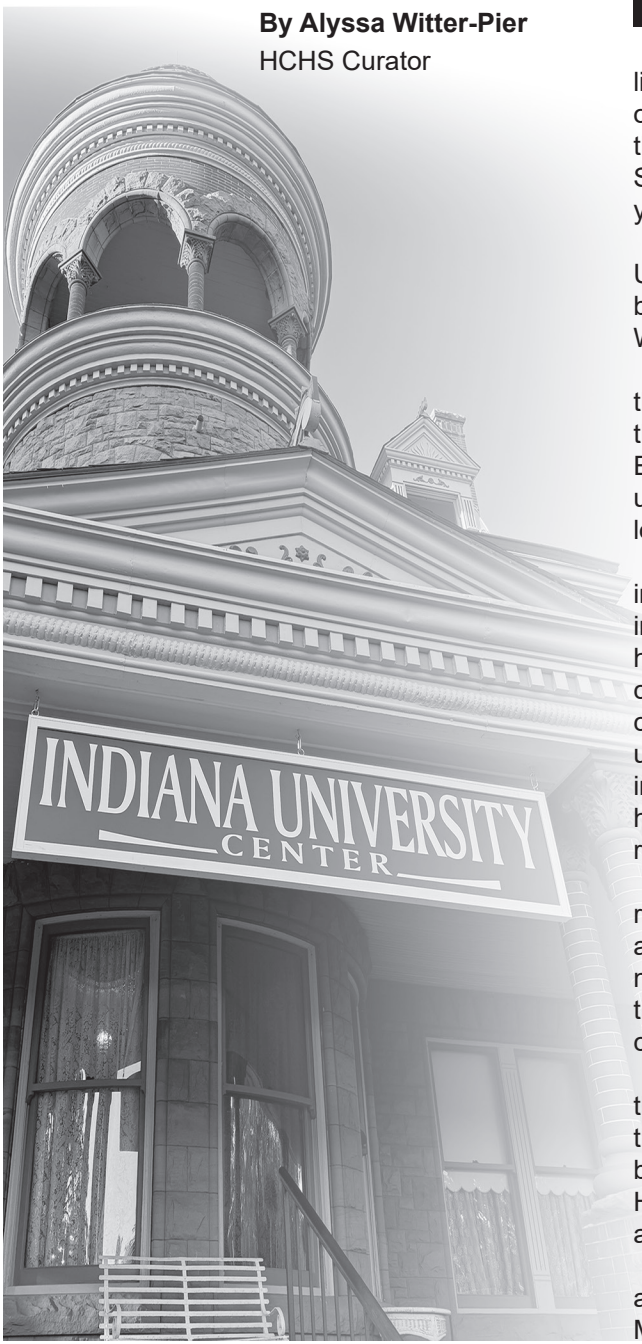
With a grant from Indiana Automotive, an affinity group of Indiana Landmarks, we were able to provide take-home educational activity kits for children. Other activities included a scavenger hunt, coloring pages, an educational show-and-tell artifact table, and an onsite car-building station. Visitors could either use a prebuilt car or make their own and race on the derby track graciously provided by Scout Pack 3527. Tom Tolen and Mayor Tyler Moore went head-to-head in their annual derby race where Tolen narrowly snatched the win.

Jerry and Marcia Nelson kept the history alive as Mr. and Mrs. Kingston, greeting visitors all weekend. The clothing display of hats, dresses, and other vintage fashion by Lois Bell was very popular with visitors with something for everyone to enjoy.

We are excited to bring it all back this year on July 24 (4 - 8 p.m.) and July 25 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.), hopefully with perfect weather!

Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore, right, admits defeat to Tom Tolen while two young guests watch intently as HCHS Board member Gale Hendricks starts the race. Opposite page: Marcia and Jerry Nelson take us back in time. (Photos Courtesy HCHS)

IU at the Seiberling



By Alyssa Witter-Pier
HCHS Curator

IU at the Seiberling, the Howard County Historical Society's latest exhibit, opened Sept. 4, 2025.

Opening night for the public featured light refreshments, a chance to talk to one-time students there, and a first look at the exhibit highlighting the history of the Seiberling Mansion during the nearly 20 years it served as a college campus.

The exhibit follows the history of Indiana University in Kokomo, examining its early beginnings through its transition to the Washington Street Campus.

In 1946, Indiana University purchased the Seiberling Mansion (and later acquired the Elliott House) for use as its "Kokomo Extension Center," a purpose that continued until the campus moved to its current location in 1965.

Through archives research, dates and important milestones were identified, but interviews with previous students really helped convey what it was like having classes in a mansion. Oral histories captured student life in a historic house, uncovering memories of college dances in the foyer, chemistry labs in the carriage house, and math classes in the dining room.

A discovery in the mansion's basement revealed old slate that most likely served as chalkboards for classrooms in the mansion. Traces of student life remain on the door frames where classroom numbers can still be identified 60 years later.

HCHS would like to extend gratitude to the many individuals who contributed to this project, including interviewees, exhibition help, and the support of an Arts and Humanities Discretionary Grant from Indiana University Research.

The IU at the Seiberling exhibit is available for viewing at the Howard County Museum during normal hours of operation.

Cemetery Walk: Back to the past

By Sarah Cotner HCHS Board Member

LOCAL HISTORY WAS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE again in October 2025 when the Howard County Historical Society hosted its annual Cemetery Walk at Crown Point Cemetery in Kokomo.

Over two evenings, visitors followed guided tours through the historic cemetery, stopping at gravesites where costumed interpreters shared the stories of individuals whose lives shaped the community. Through first-person storytelling and carefully researched performances, the past came alive among the monuments and markers of Crown Point.

A memorable portrayal was **DR. HENRY COLE**, a Kokomo physician, fire chief, and mayor in the early 1880s. Known both for his public service and the dramatic circumstances surrounding his death in 1881, Cole remains one of the city's most talked-about historical figures. His life and legacy are commemorated by a historical marker in downtown Kokomo recognizing his role in the city's early civic leadership and the enduring intrigue surrounding his story.

The life of **JOHN WESLEY LEARNER**, a Kokomo native and longtime leader of Kokomo Opalescent Glass, was shared through a portrayal of his daughter, Grace Learner, who spoke during a scene set at her father's funeral in 1940.

PETER TOUBY, a wagon maker who came to Indiana in 1850, was represented by descendants Albert Touby and his son Emmett, who reflected on the family's values of independence and hard work.

Civil War soldier **MILTON GARRIGUS** was remembered through letters he wrote from the front during the war, read by his friend and fellow pioneer **JEROME BROWN**, who shared Garrigus's news with family and neighbors back home.

Automotive pioneer **ELMER APPERSON** appeared alongside his wife, **CATHERINE ELIZABETH**, sharing stories from the early days of the automobile industry.

Community activist **ELNORA "NORA" TRUEBLOOD GAUSE** was presented through remarks from President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his assistant, recognizing her long life and civic engagement.

Visitors also met beloved Kokomo High School teacher **HELEN JESSE ROSS** (portrayed by Marcia Nelson at left), accompanied by memories from former student Ethel Kerlin, and learned about **KATHALEEN COOPER GRAHAM**, a Kokomo-born actress who achieved success on the Broadway stage in the 1920s before returning to Kokomo later in life.

The tour ended with **MARK MCTIGUE**, Crown Point Cemetery's long-term sexton, whose reflections on caring for the cemetery and its residents provided a fitting close to an evening dedicated to remembering part of Howard County's past.

Volunteer/ Outreach Coordinator Updates

By Anne Shaw
HCHS Executive Director

Courtesy HCHS

Caroline Moore

We are excited to announce that HCHS has a new Volunteer/ Outreach Coordinator.

Caroline Moore joined us early this year to take over one of our most important jobs -- helping organize our wonderful volunteer base and public outreach.

Born and raised in Rossville, Indiana, Caroline attended Butler University where she studied International Relations and Sociology. For 15 years, she lived and worked in Indianapolis, serving several nonprofits in grant writing, curriculum writing, and sponsor relations roles, before getting into the hospitality and entertainment fields. Now residing in Peru, where most of her own history originates, Caroline is heavily involved in local community organizations like ReDiscover Downtown Peru and Ole Olsen Memorial Theatre.

As volunteer/outreach coordinator, Caroline is excited to bring her unique areas of expertise and passion for community engagement to the role and to work together with the incredible staff, board members, and dedicated volunteers she has found here.

To contact Caroline, call the office at 765-452-4314. Email caroline.moore@howardcountymuseum.org.

Welcome to the team, Caroline!

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*As Caroline comes aboard, we want to acknowledge our sadness that previous Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator **Laura Cone** decided to shift her focus back to family -- a very important task! While we are sad to see her go, we thank her immensely for all of her hard work. Coming in at Christmas 2024 was certainly trial by fire, but Laura handled it all with grace and greatly improved our volunteer and outreach programs. She has promised to stick around in a volunteer capacity as we move forward, so look for her on some committees and other volunteer efforts. We are happy to pass along any messages or well wishes.*

HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

presents the

2026 HALL OF LEGENDS

honoring

EBONI GATLIN GRIFFIN
ROBERT A. SIMMONS
WILLIAM SIMON HARRIS
DR. MELANIE ZECK
RICHARD B. MOORE
PATRICIA ARNETT ZECK

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026

Doors open at 6:00 p.m.
Hingst Hall, Ivy Tech Kokomo
1815 E Morgan St, Kokomo, IN 46901

Tickets are $65 and available at
www.hchistory.org/programs/howard-county-legends
765-452-4314 • 1218 W. Sycamore St.

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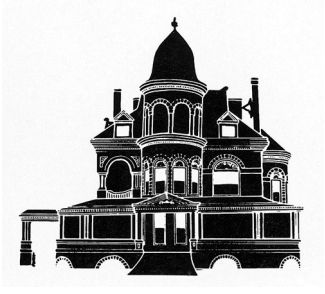

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