

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

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BIZZIS, DIROSA AND MOK WIN TOP HONORS FROM SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

SEPT. 17, 2021 -- Julie Bizzis and Randy Dirosa share Saugatuck-Douglas History Center's top-honor Charles J. Lorenz Award of Achievement for 2021, and Mike Mok takes SDHC's Volunteer of the Year.

The Lorenz Award was established in 1997 to honor the memory of Charles "Chuck" Lorenz, who gave generously of his time, talent, money and energy in researching the early history of Saugatuck and Singapore, as well as the formation and development of this organization. Winners are selected each year by a special History Center committee, recognizing distinguished leadership in fulfilling the Center's mission to "help the community understand its past and use its history to shape its future and preserve its quality of life".

Bizzis and Dirosa, both SDHC members since only 2019, were selected for spearheading SDHC's successful mission to save the Demerest Fishing Shanty -- last vestige of Saugatuck's commercial fishing heritage -- from become lost to Kalamazoo River flooding. Jointly overseeing SDHC's team effort, Julie tackled fundraising and project management while Randy provided research, writing, strategic planning and joint-venture coordination with Retro Boat Rentals. The effort involved moving the shanty to higher ground for renovation, then returning it to the community at 730 Water Street. Along the way, Randy also collaborated with team-member and graphic designer Sally Winthers to create a book commemorating commercial fishing in Saugatuck.

The Volunteer Of The Year Award honors outstanding service to the History Center. Candidates are nominated by standing committee chairs, and winners are chosen by majority vote of the Board.

Mok, another recent new-member, was chosen for instigating and managing SDHC's very successful "History Center On The Road" series, which combined three on-site presentations at the Mt. Baldhead Radar Station, Felt Mansion and OxBow art colony, all sell-out events aimed at regenerating community awareness and enthusiasm for these historic treasures. Mike also joined the Century of Progress LGBTQ History exhibit team and managed its preview reception party, a one-night gala event that brought SDHC much-needed revenue following earlier cancellation of many traditional fundraising activities due to pandemic concerns.

The S-D History Center was founded as the Historical Society in 1986 with seventy Charter members "to discover, procure and preserve whatever may relate to the civil, religious, social, cultural and natural history of Saugatuck, Douglas and surrounding area". As a volunteer-based, not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization with membership open to all, the Center now exceeds 700 individual, family and corporate members. Activities are funded by contributions from members, friends and grants, and from the proceeds of special events. SDHC also is supported in part by the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information about the History Center and its many volunteer opportunities, visit www.MySDHistory.org.

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TWO PHOTOS ATTACHED SEPARATELY (see jpegs "RD+JB" and "Mok")

Caption/RD+JB: Randy Dirosa and Julie Bizzis share SDHC's Charles J. Lorenz Award.

Caption/Mok: Mike Mok is SDHC's Volunteer of the Year.