

Ramsey County Historical Society  
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## Six Authors Receive 2020 Virginia B. Kunz Award from Ramsey County Historical Society

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) recognized not one but three articles as the best local histories in the Society's *Ramsey County History* magazine for 2018 and 2019 at the RCHS Publications Recognition Night on November 17, 2020.

Winners of the Virginia B. Kunz award include:

- Teresa Swanson, Sydney Beane, and William Beane, who wrote "Charles and Elaine Eastman: Their Years in St. Paul, 1893–1898,"
- Krista Finstad Hanson and Kitty Gogins for two connected articles, "One Hundred Years Serving New Americans: The Centennial of the International Institute" and "Growing Up in Ramsey County: With a Dash of Foreign Spice," and
- Jeremiah E. Ellis, author of "St. Paul's Distinct Leadership Tradition: A Century of the Sterling Club."

RCHS Editorial Board Chair Anne Cowie presented the awards virtually to the six writers and historians. The recognition includes a plaque honoring the recipients' work and a small cash prize, which was made possible by generous memorial gifts to the Society in honor of Virginia Brainard Kunz, the first editor of the organization's award-winning, quarterly magazine. Presented as a live Zoom event partnership with Historic Saint Paul, the RCHS Publications Recognition Night included trivia questions that were developed around the winners and their articles.

Following Kunz's death in January 2006, the Society established the award, which is given every two years, to the author or authors of the best article published in the magazine that meets three criteria:

- The article has a new, more complete, or corrective contribution to material dealing with the history of Ramsey County, Minnesota,
- The article has an effective balance of appropriate historical research, documentation, and accessibility to a broad audience of readers,
- The article is written in an engaging style and includes appropriate visual materials such as photos, maps, diagrams, or other illustrations that encourage the reading of local or regional history.

A panel of three independent, community judges, Readus Fletcher II, who recently retired from the City of Saint Paul, and is the founder and producer of *Tellstar News*; Clarence White, a writer, poet, and the associate director of the East Side Freedom Library; and Sue Zumberge, owner of Subtext Books in downtown St. Paul, selected the winning articles.

In recognizing these three histories as 2020 winners, the judges stated, "The reason all three are important at this time is that they address narratives from the past that are still relevant and being discussed today. By presenting the three together, we can better understand the issues we are facing now – stolen lands and mistreatment of Native Americans, stolen people and mistreatment of African Americans, and the untold stories of immigrants and how their struggles and diversity have made Minnesota stronger. They should be recognized together in parallel."

Teresa Swanson is a public historian and former manager of the Ramsey County Historical Society's Gibbs Farm. During her tenure there, the society developed its Dakota interpretation to complement the existing Gibbs family interpretation at the farm. Brothers Sydney Beane and William Beane are members of the Flandreau Santee Sioux tribe and direct descendants of Mahpiya Wicasta. Sydney Beane is a documentary film producer, and William Beane is a tribal historian.

Krista Finstad Hanson is an English teacher, historian, and writer. She is a former instructor at the International Institute of Minnesota and the author of three books. Kitty Gogins is the daughter of refugees. She was president of the Board of Directors of the International Institute of Minnesota from 2011 until 2019 and has served on the Roseville Area School Board and the Equity Alliance MN Board. She is a business consultant providing strategic and project leadership for nonprofits and government entities and helping organizations envision and plan their future with an equity lens.

Jeremiah E. Ellis co-created the 2017 Cap Wigington History and Architecture and Bike Tour to uplift local African American history. Ellis is a member of the African American Interpretive Center of Minnesota and a seventh-generation Minnesotan. He holds a master's degree in public administration and a graduate certificate in strategic management.

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#### FOR MEDIA INFORMATION or IMAGES

For more complete biographical information on these authors and judges, to learn more about the Virginia B. Kunz Award, or to purchase issues featuring the winning articles, please visit <https://publishing.rchs.com/> or contact the Ramsey County Historical Society, 323 Landmark Center, 75 West Fifth Street, St. Paul, MN 55102; (651) 222-0701 or [editor@rchs.com](mailto:editor@rchs.com).

The Ramsey County Historical Society offers fun, hands-on programs for children and adults through the Gibbs Farm: Pathways to Dakota & Pioneer Life; creates and curates exhibitions of historical significance at the Landmark Center and other venues; provides documents and research opportunities at our Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center, also in the Landmark Center; manages a large collection of historical artifacts, photos, and documents; and publishes an award-winning quarterly magazine, books and other publications on the history, people, and stories of Ramsey County.

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