

**GREATER NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
ROBERT B. STEELMAN METHODIST HISTORY AWARD  
GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL CHURCH HISTORY**

The Robert B. Steelman Methodist History Award is given annually to the local church history which exemplifies an inclusive narrative on the life and ministry of the congregation from its beginnings to the present day. It is named for the Reverend Robert B. Steelman, author and conference historian, whose scholarly contributions in documenting church life within the bounds of Greater New Jersey United Methodism have added greatly to our ministry of memory. The purpose of the award is to promote and celebrate the research, writing and publication of local church histories by which to show how the past informs the present and future ministry of the parishes within the conference boundaries.

In this day of mass media it is imperative that we embrace all forms of contemporary mediums so that each submission may be in one of the following formats: print, electronic presentation and audio-visual. All entries must be submitted in proper archival formats to ensure their longevity for future research.

Printed submissions should be on acid-free paper regardless of length. Two copies are required for deposit in both the GNJCAH and GCAH holdings. Digital manuscripts will only be accepted in either RTF or PDF formats. Submissions in Microsoft Word or other word processing formats will not be accepted. If materials in the digital file are scans or other materials, the scans must be of a legible resolution. Power point entries need to have both the original format as well as PDF copy. Supporting guides for the power point need to be in PDF format as well.

Electronic presentations in the form of digital recordings need to be submitted in both archival and web-based formats. Audio recordings need to be in WAV and MP3 formats and audio-visual entries are to be submitted in both AVI and MP4 formats. The exception to this rule is a PowerPoint submission. All other formats need to be discussed with the judging committee prior to submission.

All entries are to focus only on a local church history and not on an institution, district, conference, personal memoirs (unless it is the thread that ties the larger story together) or thematic histories. The history should not be limited to just buildings and pastors. It is to reflect the historical life of the congregation within and ministry to the community in which it serves. A good history will contain the following elements: historical dates documenting major events, images, former and present ministers, images of buildings both exterior and interior images if available, images of events and people, human interest stories related to church members and their contributions, various ministries both within and beyond the local church, highs and lows the church faced in its life span, current memberships list as well as boards and committees. If the submission is a previously written history, it will need updating if more than five years old. Otherwise, the submission will not be considered in the final judging.

We suggest that the submission not be rushed. Entry deadline is mid-January; date to be announced in publicity. Any submission after mid-January deadline will automatically be placed in next year's contest. It is better to wait to submit the history the following year in order to avoid compromising the final product. Remember, this is your gift to the endless line of splendor that is Greater New Jersey United Methodism for many years to come. But most important is to have fun recording your past and let it be a blessing to all who work on the history as well as to those who read it.

CAH will contact the winning church early in February. The award will be presented by your district superintendent in your local church. Remember, in the end there are no losers, all submissions are important in helping both the local church and the annual conference document its past as a way to promote the present and future.

Your conference CAH is here to help you gather information that is necessary to your research. Our archivist can assist in developing a list of past ministers, images if available, etc. Do not hesitate to ask any of our members if you have questions. You can find our contact information in the annual conference journal or on our contacts web page located within the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference website at <https://www.gnjumc.org/our-history-and-values/archives-history/> . Also visit our resources web page on links which will tell you how to plan and write the history. Good luck and we look forward to reviewing your ministry of memory!

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