



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WESTPORT MUSEUM FOR HISTORY & CULTURE NOMINATED FOR
PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL MEDAL**

***Institute for Museum and Library Services 2021 medal honors museums and libraries
for extraordinary contributions to their communities.***

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Images available upon request

September 30, 2020: Westport Museum for History & Culture (formerly Westport Historical Society) has been nominated for the prestigious national medal from the Institute for Museum & Library Services honoring museums and libraries that have made extraordinary contributions their communities. The nomination was made by Congressional Representative Jim Himes (D), Connecticut.

“We are grateful to receive the honor of this nomination which validates the Museum’s hard work serving the local and regional community, particularly during a year in which national and international events have dramatically impacted the social fabric of our nation,” said Westport Museum’s Executive Director, Ramin Ganeshram.

Over the course of 2020, Westport Museum has launched projects and outreach that has supported the community through the COVID-19 pandemic as well as local, regional and national civil rights initiatives--including a virtual relaunch of its award winning exhibit *Remembered: The History of African Americans in Westport* with an accompanying walking tour

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of the town's Black History. In 2020, the Museum published *Images of America: Westport* a photo book which has been widely recognized for presenting previously erased histories of people of color, women and immigrants.

From the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the museum quickly mobilized to provide an abundance of free virtual programming to engage the community and support educators. Its *Westport In Focus* long-lens oral history project has been recognized as a model for gathering and presenting perspectives of citizens about the virus, civil rights and other matters of local, state and national interest.

As a private institution, the Westport Museum receives no state, town or federal funding for its operations and depends solely on grants and private donations to pursue its mission of extraordinary service to the community.

“This nomination truly recognizes the hard work of Westport Museum’s staff and volunteers to further the organization’s long-term goals of providing inclusive history and world-class programming to all,” said Westport Museum Chairperson, Cheryl Bliss.

The 2021 IMLS nomination is the second that Westport Museum has received under Ganeshram’s tenure. “We look forward to continuing to live up to the honor of this nomination by consistently pursuing our commitment to providing engaging, honest and enlightening public history programs now and in the future,” she said.

According to its [website](#), the Institute for Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums and empowers American museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Since 1994, The Institute’s National Medal is the nation’s highest honor for institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Since 1994, IMLS has presented the award to institutions that demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to

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community service. Past winners have included The Brooklyn Museum; Mystic Aquarium; Boston Children's Museum, The Hartford Public Library and [many more](#).

For more information, interviews or photos, please contact Mariet Griffiths, marketing director.

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ABOUT WESTPORT MUSEUM FOR HISTORY & CULTURE: The award-winning Westport Historical Society D/B/A Westport Museum for History & Culture is a cultural center devoted to providing engaging, interactive interpretation of local history inclusive of all stories and all people. Located in beautiful downtown Westport, the Museum provides a variety of programming for people of all ages including an abundance of free events for the community to enjoy. From beloved yearly events such as Westport Is Your Oyster, an oyster and prosecco event; Spooktober, a full month of harvest and Halloween programming in October to the beloved Holly Days, an ecumenical December celebration for the holiday season to unique happenings from performances, lectures, readings and interactive activities, the Museum strives to present history in a fun, modern context. In the 2018/19 program year, as Westport Historical Society the Westport Museum for History & Culture received accolades, local and regional awards, and national award nominations for its ground-breaking exhibit *Remembered: The History of African Americans in Westport*. Exhibits such as *Liberty To Set Down: Migrants and Immigrants in Westport Connecticut*, *Becoming Westport*, and 2020's *Dragon Lady: The Life of Sigrid Schultz* explore various themes in American history through Westport's own past.