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Jane Beckwith Awarded 2026 AASLH Award of Excellence for Individual Lifetime Achievement

The Topaz Museum is honored to announce that our founder and longtime leader, Jane Beckwith, is the recipient of the 2026 Award of Excellence for Individual Lifetime Achievement from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). AASLH, a national nonprofit association, provides leadership and resources to help the history community thrive and make the past more meaningful for all people.

Jane Beckwith has volunteered for more than four decades to educate people about the World War II story of the Topaz concentration camp and tell the stories of those who were there. During this time, she led the effort to open, build, and sustain the 8,000 square-foot Topaz Museum and purchase the Topaz site.

In 1982, as a high school English teacher in Delta, Utah, who supervised the student newspaper, Jane assigned her students to interview local people who had connections to Topaz. This project grew and townspeople started donating artifacts from Topaz. The collection expanded as Topaz survivors and descendants supported her work. Soon the Topaz Museum Board recognized the need to buy all the land where Topaz was located as well as open the Topaz Museum in 2017. Jane's work and collaboration with local residents and Japanese

Americans provide a special experience in Delta, Utah, where people can learn about the injustices that happened during World War II. Jane's commitment, mindfulness, and connections are what make the Topaz Museum possible to exist today.

This award recognizes the tireless work, commitment, and sacrifice Jane has made in order to establish and carry on the mission of the Topaz Museum Board. We are thrilled to celebrate this well-deserved lifelong achievement and national award with her. She will be honored at the annual AASLH conference, being held jointly with the National Council on Public History, on September 18th at Providence, Rhode Island.

AASLH serves the tens of thousands of history organizations, professionals, and volunteers around the country who help people of all ages develop critical thinking skills and understand how learning history helps society make progress toward justice.

This year, AASLH confers 42 national awards honoring people, projects, exhibits, and publications. The winners represent the best in the field and provide leadership for the future of state and local history. The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States.

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The Topaz Museum is a nonprofit with the mission to preserve the Topaz site and its World War II history; to interpret the impact of Topaz on the incarcerated, their families, and the citizens of Millard County; and to educate the public in order to prevent a recurrence of a similar denial of American civil rights. As part of our mission, we steward 634 acres of the one-square-mile original Topaz site. In 2017, the Museum Board opened the Topaz Museum in Delta, Utah, to share the stories of Topaz's history with all Americans, for generations to come. Please visit our website at [TopazMuseum.org](https://www.TopazMuseum.org) for more information.