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## **Priscilla Hancock Cooper Wins Prestigious 2023 AASLH Award of Excellence**

Nashville, TN – The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) congratulates Priscilla Hancock Cooper for receiving an Award of Excellence for Individual Achievement. The Award of Excellence is part of the AASLH Leadership in History Awards, the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation of state and local history.

### **Priscilla Hancock Cooper, Executive Director Emeritus**

Priscilla Hancock Cooper was Executive Director of the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium since it began as a project of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) in 2017 – 2022. After retiring from BCRI as Vice-President of Institutional Programs, she continued to work as a project consultant. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, she received dual undergraduate degrees in journalism and history from Lincoln University of Missouri and a Master's Degree from The American University, Washington, D.C. Cooper began work for the BCRI as copywriter for the permanent exhibition and education consultant from 1990-1992. She returned to the Institute in 2000 to direct the Birmingham Cultural Alliance Partnership (BCAP) project, an innovative after-school program honored by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. She also directed the Institute's Leadership Initiative for African American Museums. Cooper is an alumna of the 2008 Getty Museum Leadership Institute, Leadership Birmingham 2011, and Leadership

Alabama 2013. In 2018, she received the Southeastern Museums Conference award for Museum Service and her article on the development of BCRI was published in *The Public Historian*.

This year, AASLH is proud to confer 53 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. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards not only honor significant achievement in the field of state and local history, but also bring public recognition of the opportunities for small and large organizations, institutions, and programs to make contributions in this arena. For more information about the Leadership in History Awards, contact AASLH at 615-320-3203, or go to [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org).

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#### **About AAACRHSC**

The Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium, Inc. (AAACRHSC) is a collaboration among 20 historic places of worship, lodging and civic engagement that played significant roles in the African American struggle for freedom. While recent history focuses on the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, these institutions have been dedicated to improving the quality of Black life since Reconstruction.

The Consortium was launched in 2017 when the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) successfully nominated the sites to the World Monuments Fund (WMF) Watch. The Alabama Consortium was included on the 2018 WMF Watch among a diverse group of 25 global cultural heritage sites. Incubated for two years as a project of BCRI, the Consortium is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping these sites build their capacity and sustainability. The Consortium operates with collaborative leadership rooted in a shared belief that there is strength in the unity of their common history, mission and goals.

The Consortium sites have been preserved through the passion, commitment and herculean efforts of dedicated volunteers who are committed to saving, not only these historic properties, but their important stories. Taken together, these sites provide a historical, social and cultural context for the movement that changed our state, nation, and world. Moving forward, the Consortium will continue its work to assure that this legacy is preserved for today and future generations.

#### **About AASLH**

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), a national nonprofit association, provides leadership and resources to help the history community thrive and make the past more meaningful for all people. 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. Through research, advocacy, and our field-leading professional development program, AASLH advances public history practice and connects history practitioners to critical issues in the field and to one another. For more information about AASLH visit [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org).