



18th ANNUAL CALUMET HERITAGE CONFERENCE

Calumet National Heritage Area Initiative

Nature Reworked: Honoring the Past, Interpreting for the Future

Presenters' Biographies

Jason Berry, AICP, is Community Development Director for the Village of Lemont, IL. Current board president of the Blue Island Historical Society and past president of the Blue Island Arts Alliance, Jason looks to promote local history, visual culture and creativity in all forms to craft vibrant and connected communities. His latest venture is Cart Attack, a pop-up kitchen at Blue Island's Rock Island Public House focused on Chicago-style street food elevated with the help of local producer BIOS Farm and the artisans at Breathe / Eat.

Ted Cable grew up in Lansing, Illinois on the banks of the Little Calumet River. The Calumet region is where Ted was introduced to the outdoors and learned to love nature. His experiences here shaped his career: He earned his Master's in Wildlife Ecology and Ph.D. in Heritage Interpretation, both from Purdue University. Today Ted is Professor of Park Management and Conservation at Kansas State University. He has authored 14 books, several book chapters, four scenic byway video scripts, and more than 200 articles, reports and presentations dealing with nature, travel, and heritage interpretation. Four of his 14 books deal specifically with interpretation; two of these have been translated into other languages.

Cheryl Johnson is the director of People for Community Recovery (PCR), a non-profit environmental organization found by the late Hazel M. Johnson (Mother of the Environmental Justice Movement). For over 3 decades, PCR worked under demanding conditions to advance the cause and voice of social and environmental justice. PCR's mission is to enhance the quality of life of residents living in communities affected by pollution. Over the years, PCR has become an indispensable asset in the community. They have provided legal referral services, education on the environment, health and housing issues, and organized residents around the neighborhood to enhance food and safety advocacy. Their work strives to reflect the current challenges and needs our community and residents face.

Judith Lihota is a lifelong resident of the Hegewisch Community in Southeast Chicago. She and her husband Ed Lihota, also a lifelong resident, have three grown children. She became active in the local schools when her children were students, was a board member of the Avalon Trails Homeowner's Association, and also worked in the Garden Club at St. Florian's Parish for many years, where she still sings in the choir and cantors. Judy is currently the president of the Calumet Ecological Park Association (CEPA).

Michael Longan is President of the Calumet Heritage Partnership. He is a Professor of Geography at Valparaiso University where he serves as chair of the Environmental Science and Urban Studies programs. He earned his Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Colorado at Boulder and his Master's in geography from the University of Arizona, Tucson. In addition to research interests in the geography of cultural and environmental heritage, he also has interests in communication and media geography and is currently working on a project that explores the relationship between rural change and trends in country music.

Sherry Meyer is a geographer, guide, adventurer and communitybuilder. Her grandfather worked swing shifts at Wisconsin Steel for 40 years. And, while Sherry grew up outside the Calumet she was always unknowingly connected to it, and it has called her home to a bi-state life. She taught at Valparaiso University and Purdue North Central, and for many years had a place at Porter Beach. She has been on the CHP board since 2002 and is currently CHP's Illinois Vice President. Sherry is the founder of InSites *To Go*, which builds moving celebrations of the places we call home.

The Calumet Heritage Conference is a program of the

Calumet Heritage Partnership

The Calumet Heritage Partnership is a bi-state non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the unique heritage of the Calumet region. The Field Museum is a partner of the Calumet Heritage Partnership. Together, they lead the feasibility study to designate the region as a Calumet National Heritage Area.

The Field Museum

Calumet COLLABORATIVE

The Field Museum gratefully acknowledges the following partners for their support of programs in the Calumet region:

ArcelorMittal

BOEING

Nicor Gas

Jessica Renslow A native of Gary, Indiana, Jessica Renslow's work is an intersection between advocacy, filmmaking, tourism and non for profit management. A 2003 Ball State University grad, she was chosen by the Japanese Consulate to work for their Ministry of Education in rural Hokkaido, where she stayed until 2006. From 2006-2015 she worked a variety of film/ TV production gigs in Hollywood. 2010 marked the worldwide premiere of her directorial debut at the Women in Arts Festival in Los Angeles, where she pursued a Master's in Education from California State University Los Angeles. She translated and adapted the feature script, "Spectacled Tiger" which placed first at the 2013 Sundance International Filmmaker Awards. 2015 marked her return to Northwest Indiana to helm the first Neighborhood Spotlight initiative in Indiana. As a community-builder she has championed the creation and implementation of community based goals that improve quality of life for all her constituents. Gary's Miller Spotlight received the 2016 American Planning Award for Outreach for the State of Indiana. A major focus of Gary's Miller Spotlight is introducing new populations to ecotourism opportunities within Northwest Indiana.

Serena Sutliff was born and raised in Northwest Indiana. She left the Midwest for the open skies of Texas for college, graduating from Concordia University in Austin with a degree in secondary education. She taught middle school and high school English and U.S. History for several years in Texas and North Carolina before going to graduate school at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. She received her M.A. in American History with a museum studies concentration in 2011 and shortly after started her position as curator at the Westchester Township History Museum in Chesterton, Indiana.

Tiffany Tolbert currently serves as Field Officer in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Chicago office. A native of Montgomery, Alabama she received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and History from Huntingdon College (Montgomery, AL) and a Master of Arts in Historic Preservation from Georgia State University (Atlanta, GA). Previously she has served as an intern with the Alabama Historical Commission and served as African American Programs Assistant at the Georgia Historic Preservation Division. She has completed research on rural African American History in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi, African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement and African American History in Gary, IN. Her research has been published in Reflections, a publication of the Georgia Historic Preservation Division and Traces, the quarterly magazine of the Indiana Historical Society.

Madeleine Tudor is applied cultural research manager in The Field Museum's Keller Science Action Center. Her research interests focus on understanding people's interaction with their environment relates to landscape and place-making, primarily in urban and postindustrial contexts. She has co-curated, developed, and produced anthropologically-based materials through a variety of public engagement formats, including museum and community-based exhibitions. Current projects include the feasibility study to support the creation of a Calumet National Heritage Area. Ms. Tudor earned a bachelor's degree in history and political science from Roosevelt University, and a master's degree in anthropology from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Kimberly Unger-Rodriguez is one of the founders and leaders of the Save Marktown effort. She is a long-time precinct committeewoman for the Marktown District. Kim grew up, married, and makes her home in the quaint, threatened East Chicago Landmark District.