



THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY



NEWS RELEASE

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**Delaware Educator Jill Szymanski Honored at the
10th Annual National History Teacher of the Year Award Ceremony**



Jill Szymanski, 2013 National History Teacher of the Year, with two of her former 5th-grade students

New York, NY (October 29, 2013)— Jill Szymanski, a 4th/5th grade teacher at Red Clay Consolidated School District, Wilmington, Delaware, was presented the 2013 National History Teacher of the Year Award by Kenneth T. Jackson, Jacques Barzun Professor in History and the Social Sciences, Columbia University, at a ceremony at the University Club in midtown, New York, last week. The National History Teacher of the Year annual award, co-sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, HISTORY[®], and Preserve America, recognizes the country's best K–12 American history teacher of the year with a \$10,000 prize.

Jack Markell, Delaware Governor, in a surprise video message to Ms. Szymanski during the ceremony, stated: “Teacher quality is the most important school-related factor in a student’s success. It is educators like Jill who have a special ability to bring out the best in their pupils . . . [She] sets an example that helps her peers improve . . . Thank you, Jill, for helping to inspire all of us to ensure that we do everything we can to provide our young people the best possible education.”

HISTORY® (The History Channel) also presented a short video during the ceremony, which showed Ms. Szymanski and her students in the classroom. The video commemorated Jill for her excellence in teaching and featured Jill working hands-on with her students.

Kenneth T. Jackson, one of judges on the National History Teacher of the Year selection committee and award presenter, said: “A great [history] teacher feels passion about the past. They are excited and convey that to the students . . . We are all, in a sense, in debt to those great teachers . . . I am proud [that our] committee . . . chose Jill Szymanski as [National History] Teacher of the Year.”

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, added: “The ACHP congratulates Jill Szymanski on being named the 2013 National History Teacher of the Year. Her passion for bringing the stories of history to life and encouraging her elementary students’ engagement in significant research and study is most commendable. It is history teachers like Jill who inspire students to become historic preservationists as they understand the importance of place and the protection of it to share with future generations.”

Jill Szymanski, 2013 National History Teacher of the Year, remarked: “I want . . . [my students] to grow up to be good citizens and active members of our democracy. I want them to know about the freedoms our country was founded on and to understand how hard our citizens are willing to fight to protect those freedoms . . . Having the skills to overcome obstacles and face challenges head-on is a skill I hope they take with them when they leave me.”

Ms. Szymanski holds a Master of Education, Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Delaware and has taught at Brandywine Springs School in the Red Clay Consolidated School District, Wilmington, Delaware, for more than thirteen years. She creates learning environments for her students that encourage them to explore history in inspired ways. Students demonstrate their knowledge through multimedia projects, oral presentations, acting, and painting. They also develop critical thinking skills by researching competing primary source documents and debating differing viewpoints in class. She has previously received the 2012 Brandywine Springs School Teacher of the Year Award and was a Red Clay Consolidated School District Teacher of the Year finalist.

In conjunction with the award ceremony and an all-expenses paid trip to New York City, Ms. Szymanski, two of her students, and select colleagues and family members also received a private tour of the Gilder Lehrman Collection. Ms. Szymanski’s school received an archive of history books and automatic membership into the Gilder Lehrman Affiliate School Program, an expansive network of more than 3,000 schools across the nation committed to improving history education.

Ms. Szymanski was selected out of a pool of more than 1,000 applicants nationwide and is the 10th honoree of the National History Teacher of the Year Award, started in 2004.

To learn more about Jill Szymanski and view her speech and HISTORY’s tribute video to her, visit www.gilderlehrman.org/2013nhtoy.

learning of American history, by focusing on document-based history education and working through an array of national programs. The Institute seeks to instill in every individual an understanding of America's past and its value in today's world and the future. Gilder Lehrman creates and works closely with history-focused schools through its [Affiliate School Program](#); organizes [teacher seminars](#); creates [Common Core professional development programs](#); produces print and digital publications and [traveling exhibitions](#); hosts lectures by eminent historians; administers a [History Teacher of the Year Award](#) in every state and US territory; and offers [national book prizes](#). The Gilder Lehrman website, www.gilderlehrman.org, serves as a gateway to American history online with rich resources for educators designed specifically for K–12 teachers and students.



About HISTORY®

HISTORY® and HISTORY HD® are the leading destinations for revealing, award-winning, original nonfiction series and event specials that connect history with viewers in an informative, immersive, and entertaining manner across multiple platforms. Programming covers a diverse variety of historical genres ranging from military history to contemporary history, and technology to natural history, as well as science, archaeology, and pop culture. Among the network's program offerings are hit series such as *American Pickers*, *Ax Men*, *Brad Meltzer's Decoded*, *Ice Road Truckers*, *Top Gear*, *Pawn Stars*, and *Top Shot*, as well as acclaimed specials including *America the Story of Us*, *WWII in HD*, *102 Minutes That Changed America*, *The President's Book of Secrets*, and *Life After People*. HISTORY has earned four Peabody Awards, seven Primetime Emmy® Awards, and twelve News & Documentary Emmy® Awards and received the prestigious Governor's Award from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for the network's Save Our History® campaign dedicated to historic preservation and history education. Take a Veteran to School Day is the network's signature initiative connecting America's schools and communities with veterans from all wars. The HISTORY website, located at www.history.com, is the leading online resource for all things history, featuring over 20,000 videos, images, audio clips, articles, and interactive features that allow visitors to dig deeper into a broad range of thousands of historical topics.



About Preserve America

Preserve America is a federal partnership program begun in 2003 that encourages and highlights community efforts to preserve and enhance the priceless cultural heritage of the United States as well as associated natural resources. The program's goals include fostering greater public knowledge of, and appreciation for, the nation's past and its cultural traditions; encouraging broader support for saving the special places that help document and tell the story of America; strengthening civic pride and participation in ways that help build and sustain communities by preserving, enhancing, and using cultural heritage; and improving local economic vitality and livability through heritage development and heritage tourism. The Preserve America program is administered by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in cooperation with the White House, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.