



# Grand Rapids Historical Society

Since 1894, collecting and preserving our history for future generations

*For immediate release*

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## **Historic Preservation champion, Rebecca Smith-Hoffman, honored with Baxter Award from Grand Rapids Historical Society**

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The Grand Rapids Historical Society presented its 2011 Albert E. Baxter Award to Rebecca Smith-Hoffman. The award has been presented every year since 1980 to honor persons who have made significant contributions to the preservation and interpretation of the history of the Grand River Valley. It is named after Albert Baxter, author of the comprehensive book, *History of the City of Grand Rapids*, published in 1890.

The Grand Rapids landscape would look much different if not for Rebecca Smith-Hoffman. For decades Smith-Hoffman has played a central role in saving prominent landmarks and neighborhoods in our city, becoming a leading spokesperson for historic preservation.

Widely considered a local authority on architecture and historic preservation, Smith-Hoffman is often found at the center of efforts to save the built environment and is frequently sought for comment by the media when historic preservation issues make news.

Beginning in the late 1970s when she joined her Heritage Hill neighbors in picketing Calvary Udenominational Church, then located on Michigan Street, to protest the destruction of houses for a parking lot, Rebecca has lent her support to landmark buildings, neighborhoods and neighborhood programs, including the Peck Building, the Blodgett mansion, Calder Plaza, the Heritage Hill Association, the South East Economic Development Corporation, the Wealthy Street Historic District Study Committee, the East Hills Council of Neighbors, the Cherry Hill Historic District Study Committee, and the Fairmount Square Historic District Study Committee.

Rebecca and friend Jennifer Metz formed Past Perfect in 1995. The firm provides consulting services for Historic Preservation Tax Credits, National Register of Historic Places nominations, historic resources surveys, project planning, historic research, and photographic documentation. They are proud to have had the opportunity to participate in the redevelopment of many of the city's historic buildings, both large and small, including the Berkey & Gay Furniture Factory, the American Seating Factory, the Monroe Avenue Water Filtration Plant, the Winchester Building, the Aldrich Building, and many, many more.

Rebecca Smith-Hoffman continues to offer her voice and support. She was quoted recently regarding the vandalism issues in the revitalized areas along Wealthy and Cherry Streets and was very active in the fight to save the St. Andrew's School building. The Grand Rapids Historical Society is grateful for her many past and her continuing efforts.

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