

## **Society of North Carolina Historians Awards in 2002**

At its 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Awards Banquet, held on November 2, 2002, in Hickory, N.C., the North Carolina Society of Historians presented two prestigious awards to projects that have promoted the preservation and perpetuation of North Carolina's history in Highlands. The meeting was attended by historians from all across the State.

At the assembly the Society presented the **Malcolm Fowler Society Award**, which recognizes the contributions of a local, regional, or State historical, genealogical, or preservation society in North Carolina, to the **Highlands Historical Society**.

The distinguished panel of judges cited, as their basis for awarding the honor, the Highlands Historical Society's progress from its reactivation in 1999, when it had no building to call its own, no funds in the treasury, and no archives to speak of.

Today the Society owns the oldest house in Highlands and is paying off its mortgage. It has sponsored successful annual fundraisers such as the Christmas Show House, the Walk in the Park, and the Voices of Highlands. It has presented displays and talks at Highlands School to interest students in the town's heritage and has sponsored with the Chamber of Commerce a guided walking Heritage Trail of historic sites and buildings in town.

Most recently it helped save the old Hudson Library building, former home of the oldest public library in North Carolina, by relocating it to the same lot as the Society's home. Eventually the old library building will house the town's historical archives.

In recognizing the Highlands Historical Society's invaluable contributions during the past three years, the judges concluded, "This newly re-activated society has overcome many obstacles to reach the impressive position it currently holds. With over 200 members, this society has surpassed any expectations to become the amazing heroes of historical buildings whose days were

numbered. They are steadfast in their cause and are deserving of much praise for their efforts. The society's unwavering dedication and determination brought together a community and preserved a major part of North Carolina history. It is absolutely amazing what the society has accomplished in only three short years!"

In a separate category relating to the writing and publishing of a history of a North Carolina county, institution, craft, place, or individual, the Society of Historians presented the **Willie Parker Peace History Book Award** to Ran Shaffner for his *Heart of the Blue Ridge: Highlands, North Carolina*. In summarizing their decision the judges remarked, "What a tremendous endeavor! This book will have a profound impact on how both residents of and visitors to Highlands view the place as it was and as it is now.

The author has done an exemplary job of bringing the history of the area alive through the mastery of literary technique. One is able to visualize places and buildings of the past. And we became familiar with the people who lived and worked there. . . so much that we 'felt' like neighbors, as though we were there when 'life' happened and not on the outside of the circle looking in.

This book, though very thick, is worthy of being picked up and read. It is not boring and will appeal to many educational levels. The pictures included are many, interesting and inviting.

"With regard to presentation, the book is exceptionally well planned. It contains a thorough table of contents, list of illustrations, index of names and places. Especially impressive are the Appendix and Bibliography sections! Very well documented.

"This is a wonderful book for an absolutely fantastic price!"

The North Carolina Society of Historians was founded in 1941 for the purpose of collecting, preserving, and perpetuating the rich history of the State.