

William Sherman Oxendine Wins 2011 Susan Arthur Historical Award Posthumously

The family of William Sherman Oxendine was presented with a plaque signifying that the former Knox Central High School and Union College history teacher was named the 2011 winner of the Susan Arthur Historical Preservation Award. Mr. Oxendine died in 1994, a month short of his 75th birthday. The award was presented by members of the GFWC/KFWC Junior Woman's Study Club October 3, 2011 at the Knox Central Middle School gymnasium during the Royalty Ceremonies of the 64th Daniel Boone Festival.

Mr. Oxendine worked very hard during his lifetime to preserve and promote Knox County's heritage and history. Best remembered as a history teacher for over 40 years in Knox County, William Sherman Oxendine was a powerful influence in the establishment of the Knox Historical Museum. His master's thesis entitled "A History of Barbourville, KY" is the basis of the Knox Historical Museum's book *Knox County, Kentucky: History and Families*, which was dedicated to Mr. Oxendine following his death in 1994.

The award is named for Susan Arthur, longtime president and a founder of the Knox Historical Museum and a teacher and librarian in Knox and other adjacent counties. Miss Arthur spent many, many hours entertaining and educating students about the history of Knox County and our heritage. She annually came to the Club's candidate picnic where she shared many lovely and interesting

stories about Knox County's early times. In her honor the Woman's Study Club created an annual award to recognize the one person from our great county who goes above and beyond to preserve and maintain Knox County's history. Mr. Oxendine's is the first Susan Arthur Award given posthumously.

After attending Union College for two years, Mr. Oxendine was granted a provisional teaching certificate in 1939 and taught at Cannon until joining the army in November 1940. After five years of service, he returned to Union College to complete his bachelor's degree. In 1948 he began his teaching career at Knox Central High School where he taught history, political science and government. He earned his master's degree from the University of Kentucky in 1955. In 1964, Mr. Oxendine began teaching history at Union College, where he stayed for 20 years, until 1984. While at Union College he helped establish the Appalachian Semester program, which he directed for several years.

Mr. Oxendine introduced oral history classes to Union College students in 1974. The Oxendine oral history tape collection dates from 1971 to 1978 and was the largest local history collection when he donated it to the Knox Historical Museum in 1991.

"Few educators have done more to demonstrate the significance of southeastern Kentucky's location and people than William Sherman Oxendine," said Charles Reed



William Sherman Oxendine

Mitchell of the Knox Historical Museum and past Susan Arthur Historical Award recipient. "His contribution to the study of Appalachian history will never be forgotten by thousands of students, readers and colleagues. He gave generations of Knox Countians a reason to be proud of their heritage."

Mr. Oxendine married his sweetheart, Lucy Hubbard, in 1945. Lucy was also a dedicated teacher for 38 years. Combined with Mr. Oxendine's 42 years of teaching, they totaled 80 years of teaching in Knox County, and touched thousands of students.

Sherman and Lucy Oxendine's four children also became teachers. The youngest, Sharon Kaye is now serving as the KEA president. She lives in Frankfort but travels across the state working for Kentucky teachers. William Sherman, Jr., better known as Bill, or "the boy," is currently our Knox County PVA. He is also a farmer and loves his jobs just as much as he did his teaching job at Knox Central. Linda and Dora Sue retired from teaching to care for their mother who passed away in March 2010 at the age of 91. Mr. Oxendine and Lucy have three grandchildren: Wendy, Bill and Molly and

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The family of William Sherman Oxendine accepts his award

Photo: Eddie Arnold

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six great-grandchildren: Hunter, Thomas, Taylor, Lucy, Courtney and Drew who all live in Knox County. The Oxendine family says the greatest lesson learned from their father William Sherman Oxendine is "WE ARE FROM KNOX COUNTY, KENTUCKY, AND WE ARE PROUD OF IT!"

The family of William Sherman Oxendine was presented a plaque naming him as the 2011 Susan Arthur Historical Preservation Award winner, and his name was added to a second plaque which hangs on the Reception Room Wall in the Knox Historical Museum.

Previous winners of the Susan Arthur Award are Charles Reed Mitchell (2006), K.S. Sol Warren (2007), Michael C. Mills (2008), David and Betty Cole (2009), and Nancy Clay Hampton (2010).



KNOX HISTORICAL MUSEUM

CURRENT HOURS:

Wednesdays

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

and by Appointment

Email: khm1446@hotmail.com