



October 30, 2024

## **History Center President/CEO Joan Mummert set to retire in 2025**

*She will leave in April of next year after guiding the History Center through the construction and opening of its new museum.*

**York, Pa.** – Joan Mummert, the longtime president and CEO of the York County History Center, will retire from the History Center in April 2025. Joan has led the History Center for 17 years, a period that included a major rebranding, a strategic repositioning and ultimately the construction of the state-of-the-art \$30 million History Center Museum and Library & Archives that opened in August. She made the announcement to the History Center board of directors and members this month.

During her tenure the organization strengthened its community presence and engagement by expanding its public programming. Starting with monthly Second Saturday talks, the History Center's annual programs grew to more than 80 each year. She also worked with staff and volunteers to expand exhibits with associated programs within the organization and throughout the community. Joan inspired the launch of The Journal of York County Heritage publication to provide more in-depth historical material to members. She established an Advancement Division and a Public Relations & Marketing Department to improve fundraising and expand audience reach.

Two of the most significant changes under Joan's leadership occurred with the re-branding of the former York County Heritage Trust to the York County History Center and the initial phase of rightsizing the organization with the development of the new museum, library and archives in the former Met-Ed building.

The organizational name change occurred when Louis Appell expressed concern about the confusing moniker – the Heritage Trust. A name study by David Polk of Polk-Lepson offered feedback and recommended concepts leading to the current History Center name. A team led by Melanie Hady worked with Gavin to create the new brand. The History Center won the 2017 Central Pennsylvania Business Journal Innovation Award for the rebranding work.

After the economic downturn of 2009 exposed fiscal weakness, Joan and board members sought solutions to improve the center's financial condition. The effort involved a 2013 examination of collections storage and all History Center buildings by outside experts, as well as an attempt to establish a master plan for improvements of all sites. The best solution involved rightsizing to reduce or eliminate millions of dollars in deferred maintenance costs and to improve fundraising. It took a 10-year effort that included numerous feedback opportunities for community involvement, followed by seven years of design, development, and construction, interwoven with exhibit design and fabrication, to produce the new History Center. During that period, the organization received the Pennsylvania Museums Distinguished Award of Merit in 2018 for the project.

Throughout the years Joan worked with talented staff members and the community to increase visibility and sustainability, expand diverse representation in programs and exhibits, and establish dynamic programs. She said her time at the History Center seeing people discover

their stories through artifacts and documents while educating others about the expansive nature of York County history has been an honor and a privilege. She is grateful to the community for joining her in that endeavor.

Joan plans to spend time with her grandchildren, her father, and her mother-in-law, and pursue all things outdoors with her husband Keith. Those who know her would not be surprised if she worked a few hours a week as well.

### **Media contacts**

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### **About the York County History Center**

The York County History Center inspires visitors to understand the past to illuminate the future, through inclusive, authentic storytelling, and preservation.

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