

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 19, 2018

CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, 605-773-6000,
Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

State Historical Society presenting highest honor to late Patricia Adam of Pierre

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota State Historical Society will be honoring the late Patricia Adam of Pierre with its highest honor on Saturday, April 28, during the annual state history conference in Rapid City.

Adam will be the recipient of the Robinson Memorial Award, one of the Governor's Awards for History. Named after former state historians Doane and Will G. Robinson, the Robinson is the highest award given in the field of history in South Dakota, recognizing a lifetime of outstanding and meritorious service.

Adam was recognized for her years of service and leadership to the State Historical Society. Pat, as she preferred to be called, died in 2016. She was a long-time member of the State Historical Society, serving on the Board of Trustees from 1991 to 2009 and as president from 1996 to 2009. She also served on the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation's Board of Directors from 2000 to 2014, the society's nonprofit partner.

"Pat was a keen promoter for the work of the State Historical Society," said Jay D. Vogt, society director.

Four other individuals and one organization are also being recognized by the State Historical Society with Governor's Awards for their efforts in preserving state history. The award winners include Pierce and Barbara McDowell of Sioux Falls, Kenneth Wetz of Newell, Melvin Fathke of Avon, Margaret Preston of Sioux Falls and the Charles Nolin Monument Restoration/Revitalization Committee of Sturgis.

"We are pleased to give out these awards," said Vogt. "These are just a few of the shining examples of how people across the state are helping us in our efforts to promote, nurture and sustain South Dakota history."

McDowells are an individual award winner. They are being recognized for their personal fight for historic preservation from 2015-2017. Their fight came to an end in 2017 with a landmark opinion from the South Dakota Supreme Court that protects not only the McKennan Park Historic District in Sioux Falls, but all historic properties in South Dakota. Because of the McDowell decision, South Dakota's historic properties will receive proper consideration under state law.

Another individual award will be presented to Wetz, who is a leader of the Butte County Historical Society and is passionate about preserving both Butte County and South Dakota history. A former history teacher and mayor of Newell, Wetz helps plan Butte County's annual caravan tour, one- or two-day tours across the region and state. His latest project is marking the Fort Pierre-to-Deadwood Trail west of the Cheyenne River.

Fathke is the 2018 History Teacher of the Year. He has been teaching South Dakota history for 39 years, the last 19 in Avon. Fathke provides a variety of activities in his lessons that bring history to life for his students. He is also well-known for bringing student teachers as well as high school interns interested in history education into his classroom to give them teaching experience.

Preston is the recipient of the 2018 Herbert S. Schell Award for the best article in Volume 47 of "South Dakota History," the State Historical Society's award-winning quarterly journal. The Schell Award is named for Herbert S. Schell, an historian and long-time University of South Dakota professor. Preston's article, "Three Catholics and a Congregationalist: Four Women and the Founding of a Medical Industry in South Dakota," appeared in the Fall 2017 issue of the journal. The article explores how a group of Roman Catholic nuns stepped in to carry out the vision of philanthropist Helen McKennan for a hospital in early-day Sioux Falls. Together, they created what today is the largest facility in the Avera Health system, which is still run by the Presentation and Benedictine Sisters.

The Nolin Monument Committee wins the organizational award. They are a group of volunteers who worked to solicit funds, research materials, acquire grants and in-kind labor, and hire and supervise construction companies in order to preserve the monument near the Regional Health Sturgis Hospital. The monument memorializes horseback mail carrier Charles "Red" Nolin, who died under mysterious circumstances in 1876.

The Saturday awards luncheon is part of this year's State Historical Society annual history conference, taking place Friday and Saturday, April 27-28 in Rapid City. This year's theme is "Infinite Variety: Past, Present, Future." Registrations are still being accepted. Call 605-773-6000 for more information or visit www.history.sd.gov.

-30-

About the South Dakota State Historical Society

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Education. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call 605-773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call 605-394-1936 for more information.